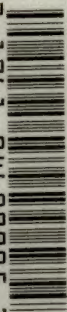



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# BELGIUM







# BELGIUM



BY FRANK BRANGWYN, A.R.A.

HON. MEMBER OF LA SOCIÉTÉ ROYALE DES BEAUX-ARTS DE BRUXELLES; CAVALIERE OF THE ORDER OF THE CROWN OF ITALY, ETC. ETC. . . . .

WITH TEXT BY HUGH STOKES, AUTHOR OF "FRANCISCO GOYA," "THE ETCHINGS OF CHARLES MÉRYON," "SIR ANTHONY VAN DYCK," "BENOZZO GOZZOLI," ETC. ETC.

AND AN INTRODUCTION BY M. PAUL LAMBOTTE, DIRECTEUR AU MINISTÈRE DES SCIENCES ET DES ARTS DE BELGIQUE . . . . .

WITH FIFTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS . . . . .

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THE KING OF THE BELGIANS







## AVANT-PROPOS



USQU'À présent il fut certes d'usage qu'une préface, une introduction ou une note préliminaire fut placée à la première page d'un livre à l'effet de présenter formellement l'auteur au lecteur. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Aussi demandait-on cette prose à quelque personnalité éminente dont l'autorité cautionnait le mérite de l'ouvrage. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Sans doute d'autres livres dûs à des auteurs déjà notoires ou célèbres étaient publiés aussi, mais ceux-là n'avaient pas besoin d'une introduction—en manière de présentation—signée par quelque confrère illustre. Généralement l'auteur, après quelque déférente dédicace, rédigeait lui-même son "avis au lecteur." ❀ ❀ Dans la circonstance présente il s'agit d'une œuvre due à un artiste qui a conquis la plus éclatante renommée. Ses succès ne se comptent plus. Sa réputation est mondiale. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ Un recueil d'estampes signées par Frank Brangwyn n'a nul besoin qu'on le signale à l'attention des amateurs d'art. Ce nom se suffit et s'impose à lui seul. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ Aussi l'auteur—et l'éditeur—ont-ils pu se permettre cette excentricité de choisir un préfacier inconnu et de bousculer toutes les traditions de la librairie en préambulant le chef-d'œuvre nouveau de Brangwyn d'un texte sans prestige. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ Si l'on recherche les raisons de cette anomalie on découvrira peut-être que le titre officiel d'un fonctionnaire du service des Beaux-Arts de Belgique en mission à Londres a pu paraître une garantie. Et cela excusera, pour un artiste indépendant comme l'est Brangwyn, le choix singulier, le choix déconcertant auquel il s'est arrêté. ❀ ❀ ❀ La description chatoyante par laquelle M. Hugh Stokes a commenté les visons du maître a son charme et sa saveur saines. ❀ ❀ ❀ M. Hugh Stokes connaît à merveille la Belgique. Ses descriptions sont comme les paroles du chant sous les pages de rythme et d'harmonie que Frank Brangwyn, avec son sens délicatement musical des valeurs, a gravées dans le bois. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ Qu'ajouterai-je à leur apport ? Et pour quoi ai-je consenti à tâcher



d'y ajouter quoi que ce soit ? Parce que je veux tenter de dire, avec simplicité et sincérité, mon émotion devant les planches qui, soudain placées sous mes yeux, évoquèrent, parés de la plus intense et de la plus tumultueuse vie, les sites aimés de "*la Belgique telle qu'elle était.*" Hélas que de tristesse navrante et d'inguérissable mélancolie sourd de ce simple titre : "La Belgique telle qu'elle était"! ❀ ❀ ❀

Avant de quitter ma patrie en Novembre 1914, j'ai vu Louvain, j'ai vu Arschot, j'ai vu Alost, j'ai vu Malines, j'ai vu bien des villages *tels qu'ils sont maintenant!* Je connais, d'après des documents photographiques cruellement exacts, l'aspect actuel de Dinant, de Termonde, de Nieuport, de Dixmude, d'Ypres. Hélas! ❀ ❀ ❀

Les images créées par Frank Brangwyn ressuscitent pour moi un passé de bonheur, d'intimité, de vie paisible, d'art local domestique ou monumental que la brutalité sans excuse de l'invasion a pour jamais aboli. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Oui, ce n'est pas un rêve, un cauchemar que l'on peut chasser en s'éveillant d'un mauvais sommeil. C'est la réalité angoissante et oppressante de chaque minute qui étreint notre pensée consciente. Un tel défi à la civilisation a été froidement prémédité et perpétré. En attendant que nos amis puissent nous venger ils s'ingénient à nous soutenir, à nous reconforter. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Aucun plus et mieux que Brangwyn ne s'y est consacré. ❀ ❀

Frank Brangwyn, génial artiste Britannique, par hasard naquit à Bruges. Ses sympathies allèrent aux vieux maîtres flamands. ❀ ❀

Quelque chose de l'abondance savoureuse d'un Jordaens ou d'un Snyders se retrouve dans ses peintures décoratives. ❀ ❀ ❀

Il goûta la séduction des villes mortes de la Flandre, le pittoresque des choses anciennes, et plus encore la puissante vitalité des centres populeux, l'encombrement opulent des ports, le luxe des architectures communales et des édifices religieux qui partout ont jailli, au cours des siècles, dus ol Belge. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Brangwyn a toujours aimé la Belgique, il y est revenu à diverses reprises, il y a exposé bien souvent de ses œuvres. ❀ ❀ ❀

Depuis que la Belgique est opprimée et agonisante Brangwyn l'aime doublement. Comme tout cœur bien placé c'est aux amis dans la peine, dans l'angoisse et le deuil, qu'il témoigne son attachement, qu'il prodigue son dévouement. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀



Ce dévouement n'est point platonique. Il a trouvé pour s'extérioriser la forme la plus généreuse. Brangwyn a érigé à la Belgique *telle qu'elle était* un impérissable monument, un Mémorial digne d'Elle. ♣  
Il a consacré à cette tâche des mois d'un rude et fécond labeur. Son chef-d'œuvre achevé il a simplement dit : " Je donne tout mon travail pour rien. Que l'on en fasse un album, qu'on le publie, qu'on le répande, j'espère que l'on en vendra des milliers d'exemplaires. Tous les bénéfices à provenir de la vente seront dévolus au fond de secours en faveur des Belges." ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣  
Noble désintéressement de la part d'un maître dont les estampes, passionnément recherchées par les collectionneurs, atteignent des prix fous ! Aussi le Roi Albert a-t-il consenti avec empressement à accepter la dédicace du recueil et fait remercier l'artiste de son geste magnifique. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣  
Dans la nouvelle œuvre de Brangwyn se retrouvent, magnifiées et comme ennoblies de passion farouche, toutes les qualités de puissance, de spontanéité, d'invention, de rythme et de nombre qui lui ont à juste titre suscité tant d'admirateurs. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣  
Chacun de ces bois révèle ces facultés d'interprétation qui toujours atteignent à l'effet par un aspect imaginé et visionnaire si personnel. Autour des vieilles constructions hautaines palpitent les ciels : Couchants de gloire, nuées sombres que le vent échevèle ou que la lune ourle d'argent. Les édifices, les humbles demeures, les arbres se mirent dans les eaux clapotantes. Sur les places grouillent des foules, cortèges de fêtes ou de funérailles, marchés, meetings, attroupements. Aux façades claquent les mouvantes draperies des bannières, des drapeaux, des oriflammes. Dans une vue du port d'Anvers se résume toute sa formidable et mouvante activité, on y respire l'odeur de la marée, du goudron, des entrepôts. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣  
Quelque chose de fort, de salubre est empreint dans toutes ces images dont les simples hachures de blanc et de noir ont tant de couleur et de variété. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣  
Elles font pressentir en quelque sorte l'âme de la nation irréductible qui allait mériter d'être appelée la Belgique héroïque et martyre ! ♣

PAUL LAMBOTTE,

*Directeur au Ministère des Sciences et des Arts de Belgique.*







# CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE, by M. PAUL LAMBOTTE, Directeur au Ministère des Sciences et des Arts de Belgique . . . . .	ix
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS . . . . .	xv
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	I
BRUGES—Its mystery—A view of the city—St. Donatian's—Charles the Good— The Erembalds—The Abbey of Ter Doest . . . . .	10
BRUGES—Baldwin of Flanders—The Battle of the Golden Spurs—Louis of Nevers—Charles the Bold—Mary of Burgundy—Maximilian of Austria— Death of Mary of Burgundy . . . . .	22
THE LIBERTY OF BRUGES—Damme—Thyl Ulenspiegel—Marriage of Charles the Bold—A tournament in Bruges . . . . .	33
THE LIBERTY OF BRUGES—Dixmude—Roulers—Lombartzyde—Nieuport— Battle of Nieuport—Furnes—Ypres—The eve of Roosbeke—The Battle of the Golden Spurs—Roosbeke—Death of Philip van Artevelde—Sack of Courtray . . . . .	41
GHENT—Its situation and beauty—Bruges and Ghent compared—The Belfry— The "Warrior of the Belfry"—Jacques van Artevelde—The guildsmen—Their laws—Murder of Jacques van Artevelde—Louis of Maele—The Black Death— The Flagellants—Victory of Philip van Artevelde at Bruges—His death at Roosbeke . . . . .	55
MALINES—Birth of Charles V at Ghent—His boyhood in Malines—Margaret of Austria—Character of the Archduke Philip—Education of Charles V— The court at Malines . . . . .	70
ANTWERP—Legend of the Long Wapper—His tricks and wicked deeds—The giant Antigonus . . . . .	77



ANTWERP—Early history—Rise of its commercial prosperity—The proud merchants—Rapid building—Dürer in Antwerp—Street processions—Sir Thomas More and “Utopia”—Religious troubles—Spanish administration—Character of the citizens—Outbreaks of fanaticism—Sack of Antwerp—The prison of the Steen—Decay of commerce—The art of Antwerp—Rubens—Van Dyck—Jordaens—Feasts and prayers in old Antwerp . . . . .	PAGE 82
BRUSSELS—Charles V’s dream—Isabella of Spain—The Archduke Albert—Their journey from Madrid—State entry into Brussels—Visits to the provincial cities—Siege of Ostend—The palace at Brussels—Life in the capital—Holy Thursday—The “Ommegang”—French visitors—Henri IV and the Princesse de Condé—Brussels a place of refuge . . . . .	97
VILLERS AND LOUVAIN—A ruined abbey—The werewolf—Story of Villers—Foundation of the University of Louvain—Pope Adrian—The Hôtel de Ville—The Cathedral—“Altyd God Loven” . . . . .	109
LIÈGE—The Walloon smiths—St. Monulphius—A beautiful city—The Palace of the Bishops—The Prince-Bishops—Mirabeau on the freedom of the Meuse—The “Wild Boar of the Ardennes”—Jehan le Bel—Sir John Maundeville—Everard de La Marck—Huy—Namur—The architecture of the Jesuits—Dinant—Walzin—Bouillon . . . . .	118
TOURNAY—The Walloon race—The province of Hainaut—Froissart—The art of Constantin Meunier—The Borinage—Former rulers of Hainaut—Duchess Jacqueline—Mons—Charleroy—Soignies—The story of Tournay—Christine de Lalaing—The great cathedral . . . . .	128
BELGIUM—Its past—Art and history—The town halls—Municipal pride—The people—The martyrdom of Belgium—Its glory in the future . . . . .	139



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. GHENT . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
2. LOUVAIN . . . . .	<i>Title-page</i>
	PAGE
3. THE DUNES, NIEUPOORT . . . . .	I
4. CLOTH HALL, YPRES . . . . .	3
5. FARM NEAR BRUGES . . . . .	7
6. THE "PHARE," NIEUPOORT . . . . .	9
7. THE MARKET PLACE, BRUGES . . . . .	10
8. PONT DES BAUDETS, BRUGES . . . . .	11
9. QUAI VERT, BRUGES . . . . .	15
10. ABBEY OF TER DOEST, LISSEWEGHE . . . . .	19
11. OOSTCAMP . . . . .	22
12. WINDMILLS, BRUGES . . . . .	23
13. CHURCH OF THE JERUSALEM, BRUGES . . . . .	27
14. THE CHURCH, NIEUPOORT . . . . .	31
15. DAMME . . . . .	33
16. CLOTH HALL, NIEUPOORT . . . . .	35
17. CHURCH OF ST. WALBURGE, FURNES . . . . .	39
18. AUDENAERDE . . . . .	41
19. CHURCH OF ST. NICHOLAS, DIXMUDE . . . . .	43
20. THE BROLL TOREN, COURTRAY . . . . .	47
21. OLD WOODEN HOUSE, YPRES . . . . .	51
22. LOO . . . . .	54
23. CHÂTEAU OF THE COUNTS, GHENT . . . . .	55
24. BELFRY AND TOWN HALL, GHENT . . . . .	57
25. PALAIS DES ARCHIVES, MALINES . . . . .	65
26. THE "HALLES," MALINES . . . . .	70
27. CATHEDRAL OF ST. ROMBAUT, MALINES . . . . .	73
28. MOUTH OF THE SCHELDT . . . . .	77
29. OLD STREET, ANTWERP . . . . .	79
30. TOWER OF ST. GEORGE, DIXMUDE . . . . .	81
31. ACROSS THE SCHELDT, ANTWERP . . . . .	85
32. THE CALVARY OF ST. PAUL, ANTWERP . . . . .	91
33. HAL . . . . .	97
34. GRAND' PLACE, BRUSSELS . . . . .	99
35. RUINS OF THE ABBEY, VILLERS . . . . .	105

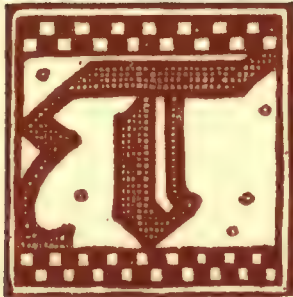


	PAGE
36. LOUVAIN . . . . .	109
37. LIBRARY AND UNIVERSITY, LOUVAIN . . . . .	111
38. CATHEDRAL OF ST. PIERRE, LOUVAIN . . . . .	115
39. TIRLEMONT . . . . .	117
40. CHURCH OF ST. JACQUES, LIÈGE . . . . .	118
41. HUY . . . . .	120
42. NAMUR . . . . .	121
43. CHÂTEAU OF WALZIN, PROVINCE OF NAMUR . . . . .	123
44. DINANT . . . . .	125
45. CHÂTEAU OF BOUILLON . . . . .	127
46. TOURNAY . . . . .	128
47. CATHEDRAL AND BELFRY, TOURNAY . . . . .	129
48. INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH, DIXMUDE . . . . .	133
49. INTERIOR OF THE CLOTH HALL, YPRES . . . . .	137
50. A FLEMISH CANAL . . . . .	139
51. RUINS OF A CHURCH, OUDE STUYVENKING . . . . .	141
52. MONS . . . . .	144

Plates 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 24, 27, 31, 34, 35, 37 engraved  
by H. G. WEBB.

Plates 1, 4, 5, 10, 21, 25, 29, 32, 38, 47 engraved by C. W. MOORE.





THE broad plain of Flanders, the smiling fields of "gay Brabant," the black country of the Wal-loons, the sombre woods and swift-flowing rivers of the high Ardennes, these form a tiny kingdom which has stood foremost in the councils of Europe since the earliest dawn of Christendom. Over this corner of the world Nature has scattered her gifts with an uncertain hand. In the west we might almost accuse her of neglect, of a certain callous heedlessness, a disinclination to aid her children in their unceasing fight against the elements. The shallow coast of shifting sand is overcast with cloud and enveloped in floating vapours of salt mist. A bitter wind blows through the stunted grass and broken reeds which fringe the dunes. Barren stretches of brackish marsh, sunken between dike and embankment, cower during the long months of winter beneath unending storms of rain and hail. ❀ ❀ ❀ But this stern and bleak desolation quickly gives place to scenes of a brighter life. A pastoral region, watered by running streams and sluggish canals, rich with harvests of wheat and husbandry, gradually rises from the plain towards the little hills of Brabant, and merges into the rough heaths of the Campine. In the south the night skies reflect the red furnaces of the mines. The earth is scarred by the refuse of the pits, and through the air booms the rhythmical echo of the pumps. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀



Then come the valleys of the stately Meuse, the broad Sambre, the steep and treacherous Semois, with their tiny tributaries, the Ourthe, the Lesse, the Lhomme. Tablelands of rock are scantily hidden by fir and pine. Gaunt masses of slate and limestone, solitudes of peak and gorge, are lost in wide expanses of rolling forest. ❀ ❀ ❀ Amidst this romantic beauty and majesty man has stood aside. The smaller towns are no more than villages. The boar roams through the thickets without a check. In the west, however, where Nature has been most niggardly, human energy has endeavoured to redress the balance. From the remotest ages man has toiled with determined and unyielding purpose to establish a home and secure the safety of his hearth. Flanders has been formed in spite of Nature. The old province is an everlasting monument of industry and labour. It is one of the first-fruits of a new civilisation. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ Here men tried experiments in life as well as in art. Hubert and Jan van Eyck dipped their sable brushes into skins of opulent colour, and revealed the secrets of every amber balsam. The master-craftsmen of Louvain, Bruges, Ypres, and Audenaerde, touched wood, stone, and metal with the wands of necromancers rather than the tools of their calling. Palaces were built in the semblance of jewel caskets, and enriched with all the fantasy that mind could conceive and hand could fashion. Goldsmiths hammered their precious treasure into crowns and diadems. Illuminators and miniaturists bent over the glowing vellum of a Book of Hours or the Four Gospels, and, as if by enchantment, the dull page commenced to glow with visions of Paradise and the New Jerusalem. And outside the busy workshops and the silent monastic cells, mankind moved forward to the call of trumpets and the clash of arms. In these grave cities were formulated new theories of a social existence based upon brotherly equality and personal freedom. Hubert van Eyck's "Adoration of the Lamb" was seen by men who had lived under the civil rule of Jacques van Artevelde, plain-spoken artizans of Ghent who had followed the brewer's son to Roosbeke. Whilst Memlinc was painting the Mother and the Sacred Child, the Magi, and the story of St. Ursula, his fellow-citizens were compelling Mary of Burgundy to grant that charter of the "Great Privilege" which restored its liberties to Bruges. Even under the Spanish subjection the liberal humanism of the land remained





CLOTH HALL

YPRES





unconquerable. Antwerp was the city of Rubens and Van Dyck as well as of Alva and Alessandro Farnese. Under the shadow of the cathedral Plantin found a shelter for his type and presses. Louvain was a centre of learning and piety. Ypres, the burial-place of Jansen, became the source of a new theology. Every city in the Low Countries was warmed by the white heat of the Renaissance. To this lilliput the outer world owes a debt it can never discharge. ❀ ❀

So, when we speak of Belgium, we do not immediately recall the busy docks of Antwerp and the Scheldt, the foundries of Liège, or the subterranean activities of the Borinage. We rather think of the old cities sleeping on the edge of the North Sea, of the forgotten joys and sorrows of Brabant, of the miracles of Gothic genius which have converted deserted streets into pathways to immortal shrines. We dream of an historic past when feudalism and democracy strove for the mastery, when the tocsin of progress clanged wildly from every tower and steeple. In mind's fancy the glorious dead live again, as surely as the ideals which inspired them centuries ago are the living ideals of to-day. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

In mitre, cope, and chasuble, processions of priests with all their holy vessels wander across the open fields, chanting solemn hymns, searching for ground whereon to consecrate their altars. St. Amand, the apostle of Flanders, carries the Host beneath its canopy. Behind him follow St. Eloi, who preached the story of Redemption throughout Brabant, St. Hubert of the Ardennes, St. Servais, first bishop of Tongres, St. Willibrord, who ventured north to Friesland, St. Piat and St. Eleutherius of Tournay, St. Norbert of Antwerp. Great Charlemagne strides through Liège, guarded by Roland and Eginhard, the sunshine gleaming on the long blade of La Joyeuse. The grim histories of Pepin, Charles Martel, and all the Carlovingian brood still linger in the cottages of the Walloon hinds. In the west Count succeeds Count; Lyderic, "forester" by grace of King Dagobert; Baldwin Bras-de-Fer and Baldwin à-la-Hache; Robert, Lance and Sword of the Christian faith, and saintly Charles the Good. Peter the Hermit uplifts the standard of a new crusade, and returns from the east to die at Huy. Godfrey de Bouillon is anointed King of Jerusalem, and wears his Saviour's crown of thorns as he leads the Crusaders to the Holy Sepulchre. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Rich and poor fall on their knees before a mirage of faith. A fury of devotion stirs every vein. Mighty lords for their sins are whipped bleeding through the streets. Criminals, self-accused, clad in winding-sheets and loaded with chains, stumble from town to town on their rugged path to absolution and the Holy City. The Black Death knocks at every door. Shrieking processions of penitents writhe under the lash of the flagellants from one altar to another. ❀ ❀ ❀ The little rivers of Flanders, the Reye, the Yser, the Lys, the Zwyn, are choked with argosies from France, England, and the unknown Orient. The vast cloth hall of Ypres is crowded with eager merchants struggling for the products of the Flemish looms. Mobs, howling with a lust for murder, race across the bridges and squares of Ghent and Bruges, brandishing uplifted pikes and glaives. An emperor rides in triumph through the narrow streets of Antwerp amidst a sea of flags, surrounded by the glittering chivalry of Germany and Spain, escorted by heralds, with all the goddesses of mythology casting flowers beneath his feet. A black scaffold stands in the Grande Place at Brussels. Alva's Blood Council has not sat in vain. Lamoral of Egmont and Philip of Horn tread the platform, and bare their necks beneath the dripping sword of the headsman. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ From these teeming cities of the hill and plain ascends to Heaven a low and unceasing murmur like the deep-toned bourdon from a rocking belfry. Merchants crying their bargains on the exchange, the clink of misers' gold, taut ropes straining as the fresh wind fills the sails on the open Scheldt, the mumble of prayers launched into eternity from incense-laden shrines, lovers whispering gallantries into the ears of their mistresses, the groans of prisoners and captives as the screw turns and the rack tightens in the torture-chambers of the jails, wives weeping over the bodies of husbands, and sons cursing the white hairs of their sires, the sharp ringing blows of the masons hewing formless stone into angle and curve, the savage oath of the assassin and the stifled gasp of his victim, the sea gale whistling through the gables, the merry dance to pipe and viol along the halls and corridors of the ducal courts, the drunken songs of carnival and kermesse, the last rattle in the throat of dying men and the first anguish of the newborn babe, the quavering voices of the chapter-clerks as they huddle in the gloom of the choir stalls and intone the penitential psalms, the





FARM

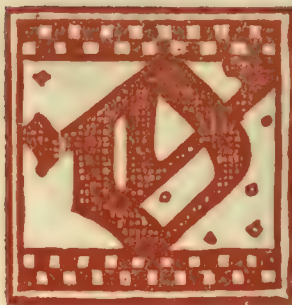
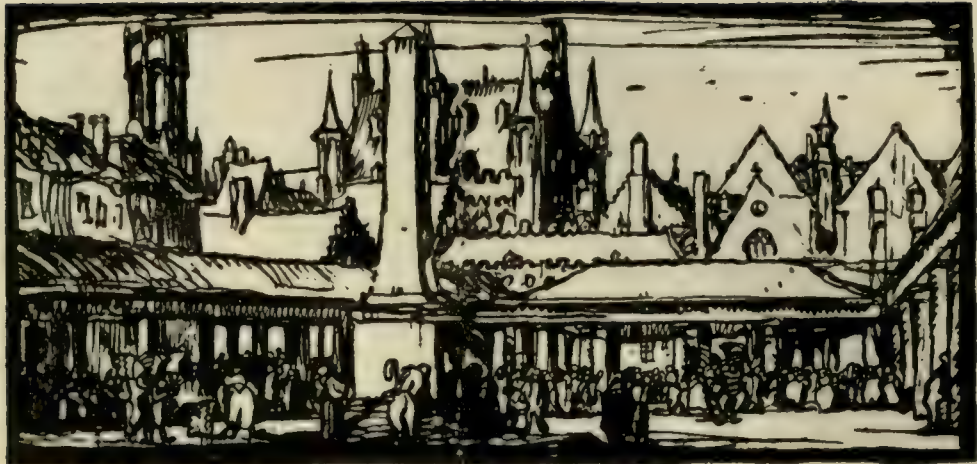
NEAR BRUGES





long-drawn notes of the great bells as they swing in the air and announce with dreadful insistency that life is growing shorter and the day of judgment a moment nearer. ✚ ✚ ✚ ✚ ✚ ✚  
Belgium is the epitome of the past, a marvellous relic of the Middle Ages, the cradle of two races which have given suck to men of state and men of affairs, bold governors, great artists and scholars, fearless warriors—a land of heroes, saints, and martyrs. ✚ ✚ ✚ ✚





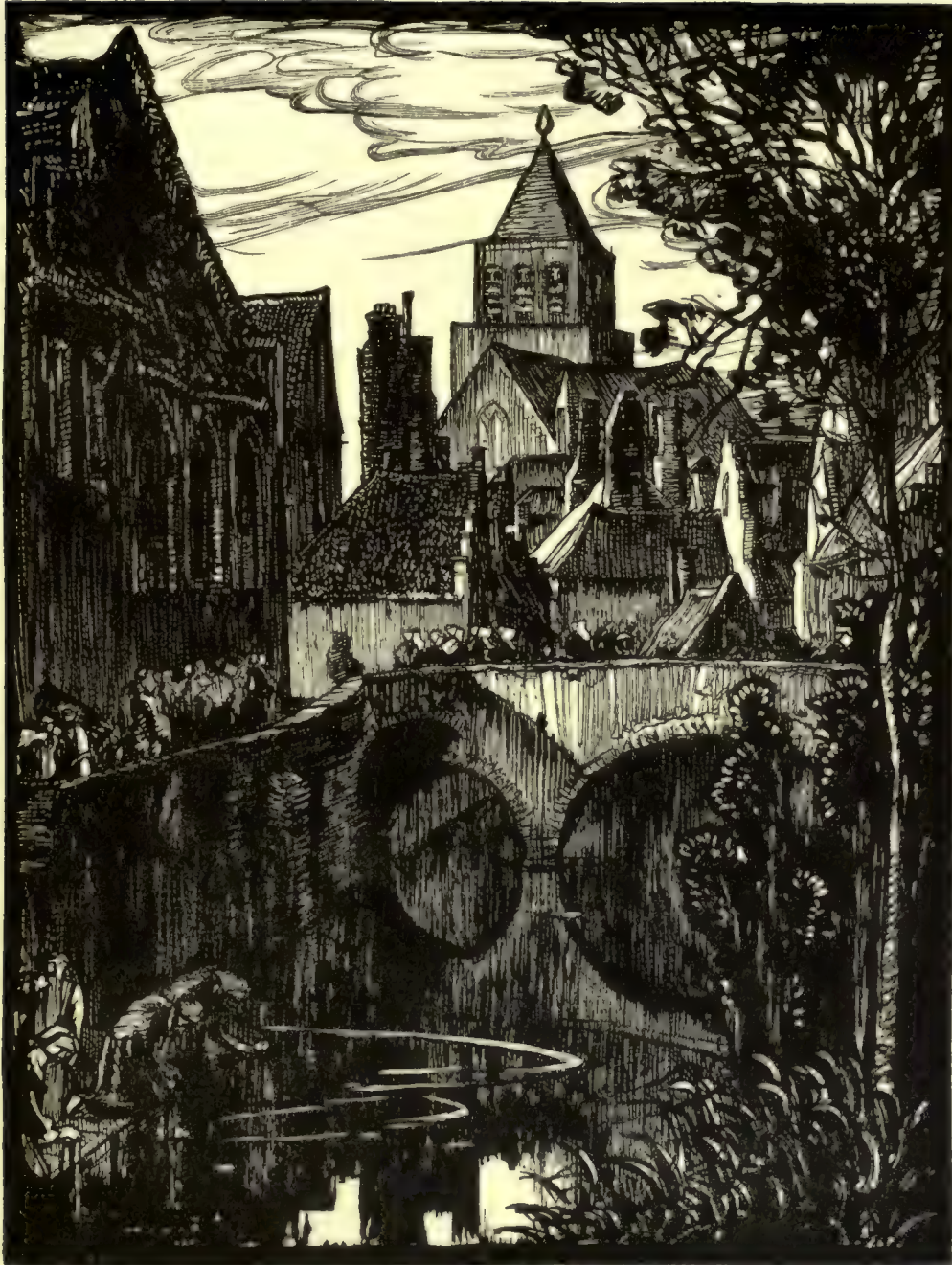
F the three sister towns of Flanders, Ghent, Antwerp, and Bruges, the third is the most fascinating, the most beautiful, and the most mysterious. Other cities of the world may have their partizans. Men have lost their hearts to Venice, Florence, Rome. Many of the older cities of Spain, Toledo for example, have carried the burden of the years as lightly. Some capitals, Edinburgh or Budapest, or little

Le Puy which is no longer a capital, rely for their crowning attraction upon advantage of natural situation. Bruges can claim no such adventitious aid. It is the work of man's hand alone. ❀ ❀

Bruges-la-Morte is a misnomer. Ypres is dead, as are Damme, Lisseweghe, and a score of the villages of the plain. But Bruges can never die. Its houses are empty, and its streets a solitude. Yet every roof covers an unseen spirit life. Through its streets and alleys pass generation after generation of phantoms, the ghosts of its old inhabitants. This is the secret of the mystery of Bruges, a secret distinguishing it from every other city on the globe. And this sober and solemn mystery is enhanced by an atmosphere of peaceful and serene beauty. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

The verdict of to-day is also that of yesterday. Adrien Barland, a professor of eloquence at the University of Louvain, who died in





PONT DES BAUDETS

BRUGES





1542, wrote of Bruges that "the beauty and magnificence of the public and private buildings in this city are beyond expression. To say much in little, all one sees rejoices sight and mind. Ghent, Antwerp, Brussels, Louvain, and Malines are beautiful cities, but nothing in comparison with Bruges. *Pulcra sunt oppida Gandavum, Antverpia, Bruxella, Lovanum, Mechlinia, sed nihil ad Brugas.*" Standing in the highest chamber of the belfry, the carillon overhead, and, by the window the watchman-cobbler intent upon his last, the stranger surveys a sea of gables, spires, towers, crockets, and pinnacles. Open market-squares and huddled streets, the lines of a novel chessboard, are intersected by streaks and patches of water—the Yperlet, the Reye, the Minnewater, the Dyver. Oases of green, gardens and avenues, break the monotony of stone and brick and tile. The pattern is that of a piece of old lace, with all the intricate knots, tangles, curls, twists, and stitches of a roll of Point de Flandres. ❀ ❀ ❀ A few birds swirl in the void, their shrill cry startling the silence. A pigeon waddles along the narrow sill. The cobbler drives home another nail. The bells chime again and again, softly, apologetically, with strange pauses, now sharp and clear, almost a piercing wrangle of excited argument, then with a trembling silence abruptly ending with a sudden halt, as a man's voice breaks and his breath fails when he strives to suppress a sudden emotion. In the still air Bruges waits—as her forgotten bedeswomen linger in the white forecourts of a decaying Godshuis, warming their marrowless bones in the glowing sun, eyes turned towards the west expectant for the last call. ❀ ❀ Beneath the tower stretches the wide plain of Flanders and the Liberty of Bruges. Ostend and the sea fourteen miles distant. Ghent twenty-seven miles in the opposite direction. The long dusty roads extend like tentacles of a spider's web across the tilled soil towards the tapering shaft of Antwerp's fane, the rugged stump of Malines, and in the near distance the huge mass of Our Lady of Lisseweghe. A hundred little hamlets dot the fields. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ A gardener sharpens his scythe upon a stone. Four-wheeled wains painfully groan and creak as the long-bodied horses slowly drag them over the Pont Flamand. A weathercock lazily swings in the heavy breeze, pointing one by one to the gates on the ramparts of the city, the Porte des Maréchaux, the Porte de Damme, the Porte des Baudets,

and the Porte de Ste. Croix with its solitary windmill. We give names and histories to this mass of stone, look for the spire of Notre Dame and the red roof of the Gruuthuis, the mirror of the Lake of Love, the gables of the hospital of St. John which shelter Memlinc's tribute to St. Ursula and the ten thousand virgins of Cologne, the walls of St. Elizabeth's Bēguinage, the romanesque tower of St. Sauveur, the exotic cupola of the Jerusalem Church, the fretted tracery of the Hôtel de Ville, and the Gothic flamboyance of the Chapel of the Holy Blood. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

These are the buildings that remain from the past, some severe in style, modestly raised in brick to resist the humid and salt air, others extravagantly carved in soft stone which slowly crumbles into oblivion. They are the homes of kings, the tombs of saints. The apostle Eloi consecrated the site of St. Sauveur's. It is not a church in which the traveller spends much time. Yet in several respects it is the best introduction to Bruges. For it is not only surrounded by the legend of many bygone princes, but it carries on the associations of the first cathedral of Bruges, the destroyed church of St. Donatian. ❀ ❀ St. Donatian stood in the Oudenburg until its destruction in 1799. In its choir was buried Gunhilda, sister of Harold who was slain at Senlac. Years before, William, the Bastard of Normandy, wooed Matilda, the daughter of Count Baldwin V. She was already married to Gerbord of St. Bertin, and the Pope of Rome was in no hurry to hasten the papers of divorce. Count Baldwin sneered at the penniless and discredited adventurer. His second daughter had contracted a brilliant match with Tostig, brother to Harold the Saxon. William was despised by father and daughter. As the princess left the door of St. Donatian this wild suitor upbraided her, shook her soundly, rolled her in the mud. He conquered the young countess as he conquered England. Matilda lived to sit on the Saxon throne whilst Gunhilda died in poverty in Bruges. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

The mediæval spirit is a strange mingling of savagery and sanctity. The pendulum swings from murder to mass. Every man is a tangled skein of virtue and vice. Subjects slaughtered their princes and then worshipped their bones as the relics of saints. St. Donatian was the scene of the tragedy of Charles the Good. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ Canute, King of Denmark, slain at Odensee, left a son who became





BRUGES

QUAI VERT





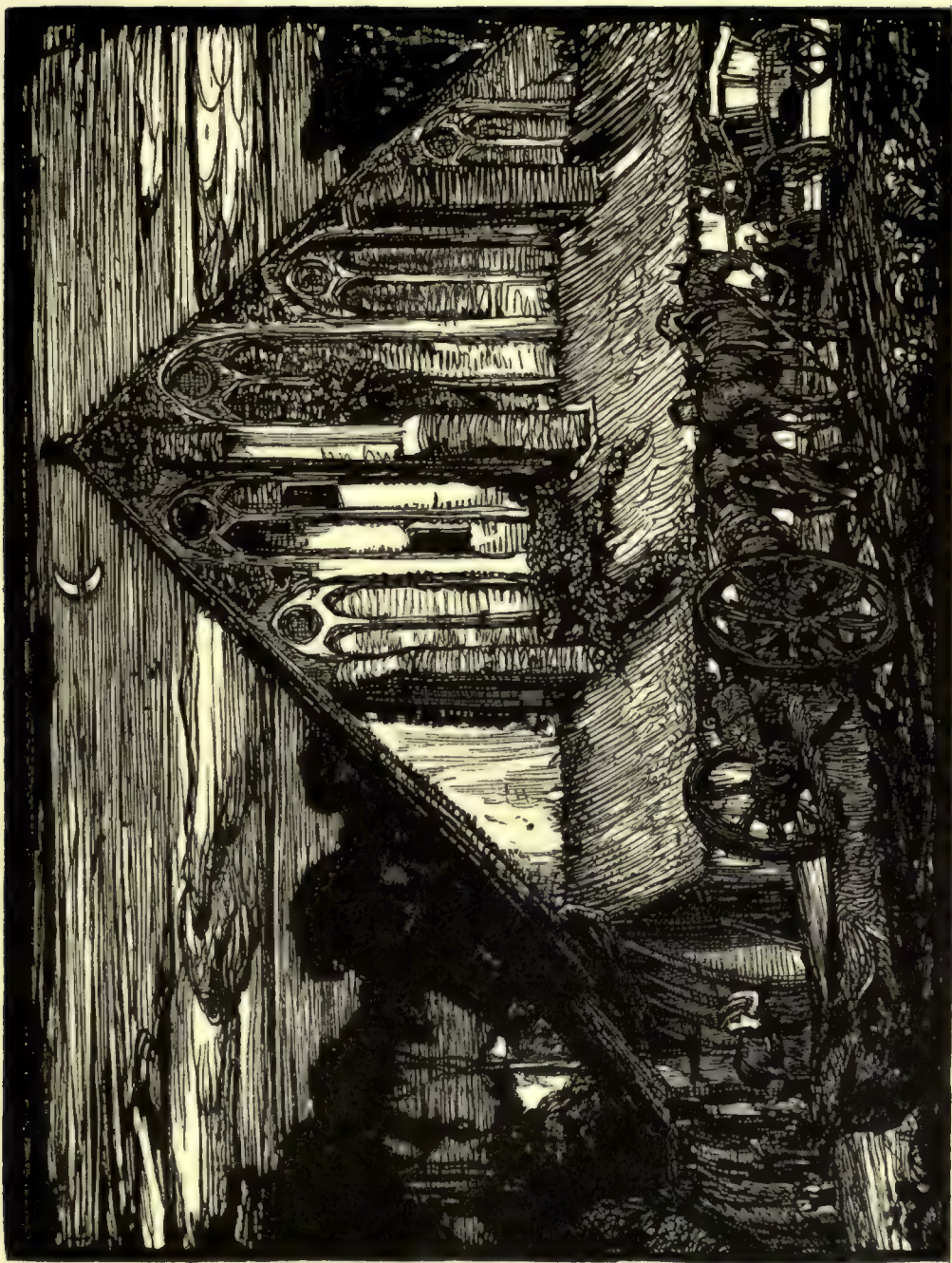
Count of Flanders in the eleventh century. Charles, the son of a saint, was a prince of the most extraordinary piety. "He had continually in his company three notable religious men, doctors of theology, who daily after supper read to him and explained a chapter in the Bible. He forbade each upon pain of losing a member, to swear by the name of God, or by anything which concerned God or His saints. And when any of his household was found in fault he made him dine for forty days on bread and water. He was marvellously severe against swearers, enchanters, necromancers, and others who helped themselves by similar and unclean arts. He drove out and banished from Flanders all Jews and usurers, who had previously lived without tribute, saying that he would not suffer them until they had satisfied and made amends for the murder committed by them on the Son of their Lord."

Despite his piety, peace did not reign in the land which owed him allegiance. The wealthy Erembalds, "free" men and true Flemings, chafed under a prince of foreign birth. Their influence was great in Bruges. Hacket, châtelain of the city, was the first amongst the count's subjects. Bertulph, his brother, provost of St. Donatian's, and head of the world of ecclesiastics, was equally powerful. Outside the ramparts lived Straten, chief of a family as rich and not less pious, also a member of the count's household and the devoted councillor of his ruler. Between Erembald and Straten raged a feud as between Montague and Capulet. The Erembalds were lawless. Having helped to place Charles upon the throne, they resented his efforts to subdue their arrogance and rapine. Besides, the Count interfered with the commerce of the city. Many of the merchants, anticipating a scarcity of grain, had stored their granaries. Count Charles commanded them to resume trading in the food of the poor. The Erembalds conspired against the life of this son of a saint, who was more probably—according to scandal—the son of a scullion.

Charles had been to France. From Ypres he came to Bruges one evening in the last week of February. As he rode to his palace of the Loove the Erembalds planned his doom. In the morning Charles rose from his bed to pray at the altar of St. Donatian. The air was heavy with death. Bruges was covered with a pall of fog so thick "that a man could see no further than a spear's length before him."

The count went forth unattended. As he knelt before the altar of the Lady Chapel, reciting the fourth penitential psalm, "Have mercy upon me, O God," a poor widow cried, "Guard yourself, Sir Count!" Burchard, one of the Erembalds, crept from the shadow of a pillar and touched his prince upon the shoulder. Charles turned his head. For an instant lord and liege gazed into each other's eyes. Then Burchard raised his sword and slew the count with a single stroke. Bertulph the priest and Hacket the châtelain swore they were not privy to the plot. In the turbulence of revolution the murdered body was left in front of the altar. Such evidence of the crime had to be quickly hidden. The Erembalds decided that the burial must take place in Ghent. But, as they were carrying the corpse from the church, the citizens of Bruges surrounded the doors and blocked the path. Charles alive was a man to be slain. But Charles dead was a holy saint and the worker of miracles. Rumour already declared that a hunchback had touched the body and been cured of his deformity. Bertulph chanted a requiem over the hearse and the citizens laid the count at the foot of the altar before which he had been so foully killed. Then the Erembalds were punished for their crime. The friends of the dead prince besieged the city. Even Bruges turned against the murderers. Thinned in numbers, the Erembalds and their few followers retreated step by step until they took refuge in the tower of the cathedral. Whilst the city was being looted by the conquering host, and the men of Ghent were disinterring the body of the count as a sacred relic to transport to their own town, the outlaws barricaded themselves and hurled stones, arrows, boiling pitch, from the roof of the church. Proud Bertulph was caught near Ypres, stripped of his rich garments, and his dismembered body fastened to a cross in the market-place. Then, in the middle of April, six weeks after the murder, St. Donatian's was besieged in form. A ram was laid at the foot of the tower. There were but thirty fugitives to be caught. They had no hope of reinforcements or the aid of friends. Hungry, livid, wounded, they surrendered after a short investment. They were to be given their lives. On the fourth day of May, Louis, the French king, ordered them to execution. One by one they were dragged up the winding stairs of





ABBEY OF TER DOEST

LISSEWEGHE





the donjon and cast over the battlements on to the stones of the square below. Not until twenty-seven bodies were clustered together was the assassination of Blessed Charles the Good fully avenged. ❀ ❀ The cathedral church of St. Donatian's has gone with all its memories. But within some five miles of Bruges there yet remains a building which links the days of Erembald and Straten to our own. At Lisseweghe, a village distinguished by the possession of a wonderful church, are to be seen the ruins of the Abbey of Ter Doest, or All Saints. Amongst the scattered buildings of the former monastery is a great Gothic barn dating from the later days of the thirteenth century. Hacket, the châtelain, escaped from Bruges after the murder of the count, took refuge at Lisseweghe, then a seaport, and remained in hiding until he was pardoned and restored to all his former dignities. Ultimately he became a monk, is said to have been Abbot of Dunes (some fragments of the church can still be found in Bruges), and founded the branch house at Lisseweghe. The grange is in use much as Abbot Hacket left it when he died on the eve of the fourteenth century. His enemy Straten forsook his guile and treachery, entered the Benedictines, and was buried a saint. When St. Donatian's was destroyed in 1799 the stones were used to build a château between Steenbrugge and Lophem. And on that house, according to local gossip, a curse has fallen. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀



AME follows name in the sinister history of the churches and palaces which form Bruges of to-day. There is the passing apparition of Baldwin, Count of Flanders and Emperor of Constantinople. Was he really slain at the massacre outside the walls of Adrianople? Or did he escape the bloodshed, finding peace and safety as the unknown hermit of Plancques in the forest of Tournay? We do know that a

wretched man was dragged back to the throne against his will, riding through the streets of his capital in the robes of an emperor and the golden crown of Flanders. We also know that Baldwin the restored was disowned by Jeanne, daughter of the count who went forth to Byzantium. His second reign was short. Captured by Jeanne, the former hermit was hanged on a gibbet at Lille between the bodies of two dogs. Was he her father or an audacious impostor? History cannot tell us. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Guy de Dampierre was another lord of picturesque story, who defied his suzerain of France and was ever at variance with his subjects. In those early years of the fourteenth century Bruges approached the period of its greatest glory and wealth. When Philip's queen, Isabelle of France, rode in state upon her entry into the proud city, she did not fail to note with envy the riches and magnificence of the





WINDMILLS

BRUGES









burghers' wives and daughters. "I thought that I alone was Queen. But here I see six hundred." ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀











Soon the citizens themselves were divided into warring factions. The Leliaerts were supporters of the Lily of France. The Clauwaerts, the men who followed the Lion of Flanders and boasted of the strength of its claws, were opposed to foreign influence. The archives of the city register a story of tumult, battle, and sudden death. Peter de Koninck, the one-eyed dwarf who became Dean of the Guild of Weavers, joined forces with Jan Breidel, who ruled the Butchers' Guild. The fortunes of Philip the king and Guy the count rose and fell until the slaughter of the French upon a black Friday in May 1302. Followed quickly the Battle of the Golden Spurs, outside Courtray, in the marshes which were christened "Bloed Meersch." The French army received the assault of the Flemings in all their strength. "So great was the number of chariots and horsemen," writes Matthew of Westminster, "that the surface of the earth was hid by them." ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

With the cry of "Flanders for the Lion!" the guildsmen pressed forward. When the night came the French were utterly vanquished. Over five thousand nobles, knights, and esquires were dead on the field of battle. Their golden spurs were carefully collected and preserved in the church of St. Mary of Courtray, baleful trophies for which the town had to pay a fearful price before the century had run its course. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

As the fourteenth century passes across the screen of history, human character is displayed in all its glory and in all its shame. Louis of Nevers is now count, surrounded by a dissipated throng of jesters, grooms, and gamblers. At the Abbey of Eeckhout he treats with Van Artevelde of Ghent. Despite his folly he proves himself a diplomatist of ability. Then he dies on the plain of Crécy, the victim of an English bowman. Follows him his son, Louis of Maele, a swearer of false oaths, a traitor to every interest but his own. He entertains Edward III of England. He builds the Hôtel de Ville. Bruges has now become the first city in Europe. Its ramparts enclose a quarter of a million inhabitants. It is a centre of commerce, of art—and soon of poverty. For the city is always divided against itself, and lastingly in conflict with its rivals of Ghent. Finally, on

a fateful November day in 1382, the national aspirations and hopes of the Flemings are quenched at Roosbeke. Even Nature turns against the unhappy people. The river Zwyn slowly silts up. There is less and less fairway for the ships of Europe to sail to the quays and warehouses of Bruges. The foreseeing merchants and traders gradually transfer their homes and interests to Antwerp.   Philippe le Hardi, Jean sans Peur, Philippe l'Asseuré—count succeeds count, and the struggle for power continues between a still wealthy corporation of merchants and their merciless overlords. Philippe l'Asseuré died in 1467. He stood godfather to Van Eyck's son, and his patronage of art remains one of his best remembered virtues. The walls of the Princenhof, from which he ruled his arrogant people, have not wholly crumbled away. The burghers entertained kings upon terms of equality. In the palace standing by the side of the church of Notre Dame Louis de Gruuthuis sat at the same table with Edward IV and Richard Crookback. Erasmus wandered amidst the groves outside the ramparts. Then came the rule of Charles the Bold, and the church of Notre Dame became gay with all the glittering panoply of a chapter of the Golden Fleece. But  

Sceptre and Crown  
Must tumble down  
And in the dust be equal made.

Charles fought and was slain at the Battle of Nancy. His disfigured body, found at last, was brought to rest in the church by the Lake of Love. "Hardy was he and valiant, as any man that lived in his time : but all his great enterprises and attempts ended with himself, and turned to his own loss and dishonour ; for the honour goeth ever with the victory." A wretched fugitive from the same fight knocked at the gates of the Hospital of St. John and begged for shelter. His name was Hans Memlinc. He breathed in peace and his wounds were healed. As a mark of gratitude he painted the Shrine of St. Ursula. So runs the popular legend, and, like all legends, it has been denied. We prefer to believe the romantic origin of this wonderful casket.          

Even more opulent was Bruges during the short reign of the dead duke's daughter, Mary of Burgundy. She was but twenty-one when the news of her accession was announced to her at Ghent. Flanders





CHURCH OF THE JERUSALEM

BRUGES





was a hotbed of intrigue, but the girl was cherished by the common people. At Bruges she walked the streets in the dress of a simple townswoman. When the matrons and girls formed in procession, barefooted and with flickering tapers, carrying the relics of the saints, and praying God to bless the efforts of their men at a coming battle, the young duchess took her place in the ranks. "Elle estoit très honneste dame et bien aimée de ses sujets, et lui portoient plus de révérence et de crainte qu'à son mary." He, Maximilian of Austria, morbid, vain, ambitious, prodigal, yet kindly-tempered and forgiving in nature, was a prince to win the affection of his servants rather than their respect. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

Quickly he scattered the wealth of Charles the Bold, the wondrous library of the Dukes of Burgundy, "richest and noblest library in the world," the jewels and the plate which had been part of the heritage of the princess. Italian bankers, the agents of the Medici, were ready to lend money upon the security of such treasure. The men of Bruges shut their eyes to the extravagances of their young rulers. Never did the joy of life burn more brightly in these old halls. The duchess had conquered the hearts of the Flemings. "Elle ressemblait fort à son père ; elle étoit blanche et gaye de visage, avait le menton long et la bouche baillante, qui étoit une chose, qui étoit naturelle aux Rois de France ; elle étoit forte et saine de corps, de bonne complexion, comme son père. Elle avait une mine virile, grave, haultaine, hardie et sans peur, étoit fort encline a se courroucer promptement, étoit de complexion sanguine, fort desiruse de lire des histoires veritables, et aymant fort son mary." ♣ ♣ ♣

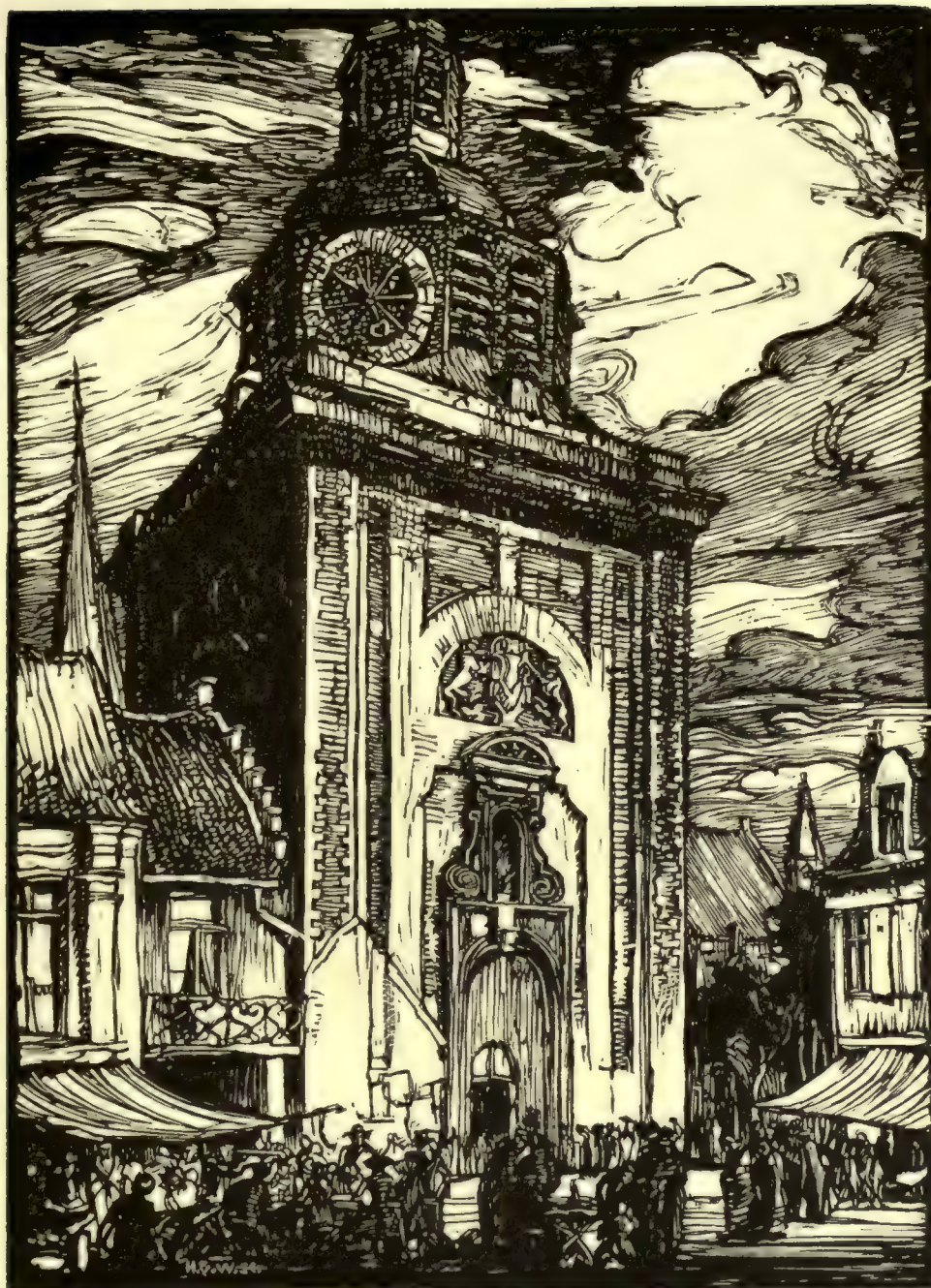
Passionately devoted to the chase, Mary of Burgundy was famed for her horsemanship. Casting prudence to the winds, she went hunting one March morning through the woods of Winendael, Tillegheem, Maele, and the marshes of Oostcamp. Thrown from her horse, she was brought home to die in one of the tiny chambers of the Princenhof. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

Outside the palace the citizens gathered with priests and shrines containing their most precious relics. Round the deathbed of the dying princess stood the knights of the Golden Fleece. Mary of Burgundy was conscious that her end approached. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

"I feel that I must die before the close of day. I trust to enjoy eternal

felicity, and for this cause I make you my eternal farewell. Adieu, then, to thee the first Duke Maximilian. Alas ! we must part. Adieu, Philip ; adieu, Margaret. Soon you will be orphans. You lose your mother before her time, but I must submit to the decree." ♣  
 "Adieu, Adolphe de Ravestein, noble and faithful heart, ever my stay in times of need. Adieu, Count of Romont, so valiant a defender of my country and honour. Adieu, Ingelbert of Nassau, never wanting on the field of battle when your arm could serve me. Adieu to you, Prince of Orange, noble Fiennes, Sires of Chimay, Beverew, Gruuthuis." ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣  
 "Adieu, Margaret of York. Adieu, Dame de Ravestein, guardian and protectress of my children ; guide them well according to my desires. My time is come, my hour is near." ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣  
 "Adieu, my country of Burgundy, of Brabant, of Flanders, Limburg, Luxemburg, of Holland, Zealand, and Hainaut. Adieu, Namurois, who have always shown me so much affection. Adieu, my commons, who have ever lent me your assistance in my need. You lose your Duchess prematurely, but against death there is no remedy. My Lords, deign to pardon me if I have ever occasioned your displeasure."  
 "Oh God, take pity on me, and receive my soul to your keeping." ♣  
 Mary of Burgundy is buried in the vaults of Notre Dame by the side of her father Charles the Bold. To her memory was raised a monument of brass, upon which were carved and enamelled all the pomp and circumstance of the puissant House of Burgundy. And on this mausoleum reclines the modelled figure of the "très Illustre princesse dame Marie de Bourgoigne." Her crowned head rests upon a cushion, and two hounds sleep at her feet. Her epitaph recites her fate and her virtues ; "Regrettee plainte et ploree fut de ses sujets et de tous autres qui la cognoissoient. Autant que fut onques princesse. Priez Dieu pour son ame. Amen." ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣





THE CHURCH

NIEUPORT







**PHILIP** of Alsace and Elizabeth of Vermandois held court in the palace of the Looove from 1168 until 1191. Their reign was liberal, and around them gathered a brilliant throng of nobles, priests, and poets. Chrétien de Troyes chanted his "Roman du Saint Graal" and the piteous tale of Tristan and Yseult. Philip himself was author and student. He was also a statesman, for, during his rule, charters were

granted to Bruges, Ghent, Ypres, Furnes, Gravelines, Nieuport, Dunkirk, and Damme. A vast stretch of country, which was under no direct vassalage to the greater cities, received valuable rights and privileges as part of the Franc or Liberty of Bruges. This country included the towns of Blankenberghe, Dixmude, Eccloo, Ostend, Lisseweghe, and Sluys. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

Damme is the most melancholy city in the world. Once it was as busy as Bruges itself, and, as the sea entrance to that centre of commerce, ranked as the chief port in Europe. Its charter, granted in 1180, gave it power and position as an independent community under the rule of two burgomasters and four sheriffs. Early in the thirteenth century William of Brittany, the chaplain to Philip Augustus of France, wrote in Latin doggerel : ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

Quo valde speciosus erat Dam nomine vicus  
Lenifluis jucundus aquis atque ubere glebæ,  
Proximitate maris, portuque, situque, superbus.

And he went on to say, "Here might be seen riches from all parts of the world, brought hither by ships in such quantity as to exceed our utmost expectations; piles of silver ingots, gold dust, the tissues of Syria, China, and the Cyclades, many-coloured skins from Hungary, the veritable grains that give to scarlet its brilliant hues, argosies freighted with the wines of Gascony or Rochelle, with iron and other metals, with cloths and other merchandise accumulated by English and Flemish merchants in this place for exportation to the different regions of the earth, whence large profits redound to their owners, who thus abandon their wealth to the caprice of fortune with a feeling of hope not unmingled with anguish." ❀ ❀ ❀

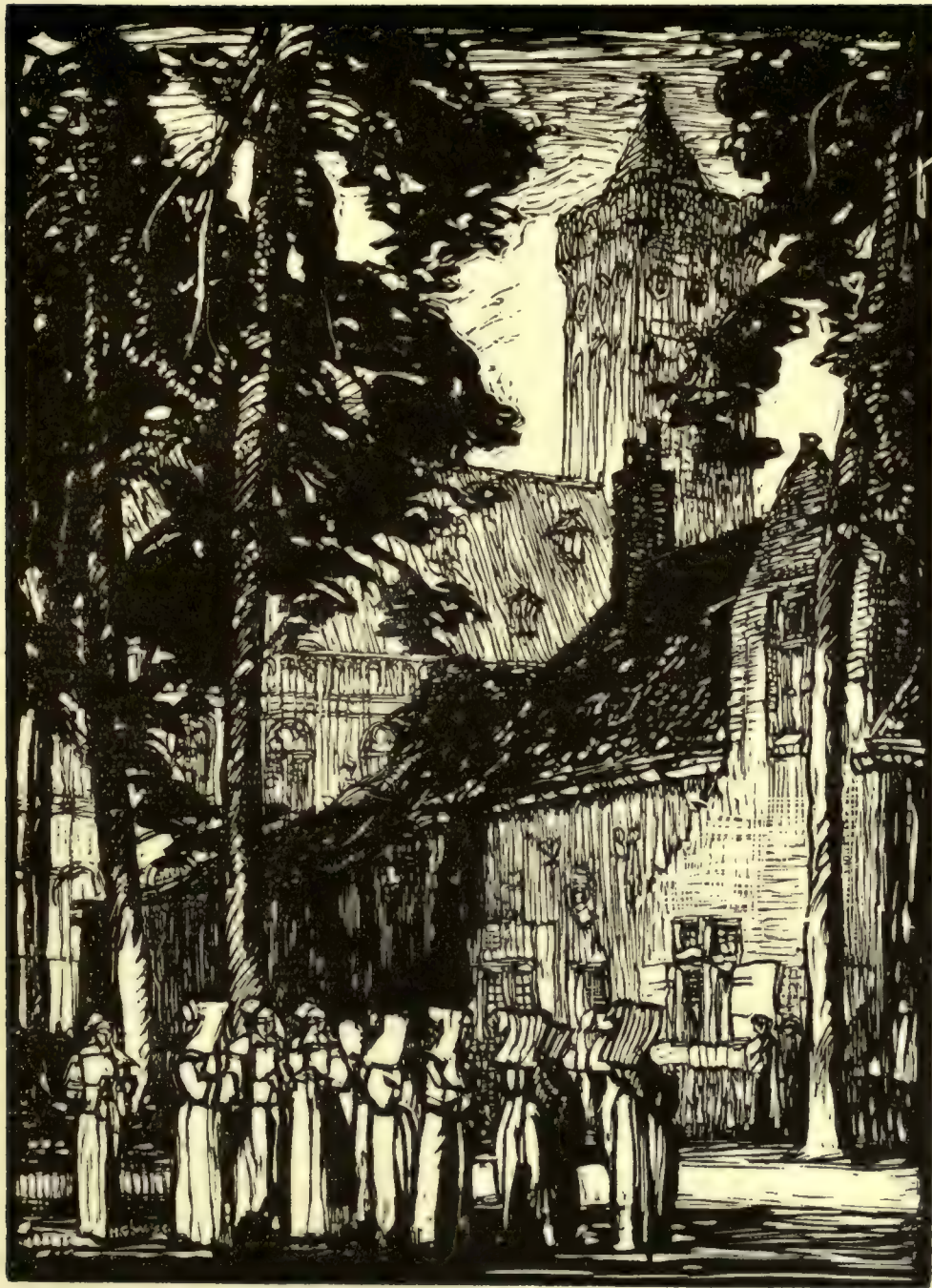
Even Bruges used the seaport as a place of safety for its treasures. Froissart relates that after a sharp conflict when "the good towne of Damme was taken" the enemy found therein "great riches, and specially the cellars full of Malversey and wyne Granade. And it was shewed me howe there was great riches there of them of Bruges which they had brought thyder, for feare had they of rebellyon of the common people." ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

When prosperity fled from Bruges the port of the Zwyn was wholly ruined. Damme is now the shell and remnant of a lost glory. Weeds sprout in streets that were once the thoroughfares of Europe. There is still to be traced the outlines of the digue which preserved Bruges from the inroads of the sea. Dante thought of it when he wrote : ❀

Quale i Fiamminghi tra Guzzante e Bruggia  
Temendo 'l fiotto che in verlor s'avventa  
Fanno lo schermo, perché 'l mar si fuggia.

The Florentine is reputed to have visited Damme during that long period of his exile, when, if he saw Paris and stayed at Oxford, Flanders must certainly have been included in his travels. Perhaps, suggests Fierens-Gevaert, he came to Damme to see the tomb of Jacques van Maerlant, or De Coster, the most celebrated Flemish poet of the fourteenth century. Van Maerlant was greffier or secretary to the town of Damme. And at Damme was born that legendary sprite Thyl Ulenspiegel, son of the charcoal-burner Claes and his gossip





CLOTH HALL

NIEUPORT





Soetkin. The follies of Maître Thyl live again in the writings of a later De Coster. There we may read of Ulenspiegel and his friend Lamme Goedzak, and Nele, the daughter of the old witch Katheline, "sweet as a saint and beautiful as a fairy." The humour of Maître Thyl is the merriment of the old Flemings who painted scenes of revelry and scenes of Hell, the humour of Teniers and the horrors of Jerome van Bosch and Brueghel. Ulenspiegel played his pranks in Antwerp, Ypres, Audenaerde, and all the cities of Flanders, called on the Pope in Rome, obtained a grace from Charles V. ❀ ❀ ❀

Ulenspiegel is a forgotten legend in these moss-grown streets, Leonardo da Vinci was a reality. That master of all knowledge and wisdom journeyed to Damme in order to design and construct the machinery of the locks which opened the waterway of the Zwyn. Dante, Leonardo, and puckish Maître Thyl give colour to these empty houses and thoroughfares of weeds. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Damme can still boast of an enormous thirteenth-century church and a charming little Hôtel de Ville. But there are few worshippers before the altar, and no work for the greffier who has succeeded Van Maerlant. Indeed the town-hall is an emblem of decay. In this building Charles the Bold was married to Margaret of York. She landed at Damme from the English ships, surrounded by a shining company of English attendants. In this musty chamber, hung with tapestry, and glittering with the accoutrements of the noblest born in England and Flanders, the nuptial rings were exchanged in the presence of an English bishop. This took place at five o'clock in the morning, on the 2nd July 1467. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

A wedding procession was formed, and the cavalcade took the road to Bruges. Margaret of York, now Duchess of Burgundy, was placed in a litter covered with cloth of gold, and drawn by four white horses. Her robe was of silver, with a flowered pattern embroidered with precious stones. Round her neck were strings of pearls, and on her head a crown of diamonds. By the side of the litter rode sixty of the greatest and most beautiful ladies of England and Burgundy. ❀

The solemn entry was made through the Porte de Ste. Croix. The houses were hung with tapestries and banners. At every corner scaffolds had been built, upon which were acted strange allegories. Adam and Eve, Cleopatra and Cæsar, St. Anthony and St. George

advanced to present offerings and read poems of welcome. At the palace the horses were unharnessed from the litter, the archers of the guard placed the poles on their shoulders, and carried the princess to her chamber. In the court of the "jeu de paume" a banqueting-room had been enclosed. Immense chandeliers, in the shape of castles with knights and ladies, wild beasts and birds, with rocks and trees, gave light. After the dinner the company went to the grand square of Bruges, the scene of an elaborate tournament. ❀ ❀ ❀

The Bastard of Burgundy held the lists under the title and arms of the Knight of the Golden Tree. Mysteries were played in the intervals of the joust. Dwarfs marched in procession. Mock leopards and unicorns presented marguerites of gold to the bride. A huge lion, covered in silk emblazoned with the shield of Burgundy, carried on his back a tiny female dwarf clad in gold who waved aloft the banner of the duke's kingdom. And then a second lion opened his jaws and recited an ode to bride and bridegroom. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Dieu louans de telle alliance,  
Crions, chantons, à lie chere.  
Bien vienne.

Dromedaries and wild men postured across the open square. A whale escorted by two giants excited cries of wonder and astonishment when a door opened in its body and syrens and sea gods issued forth. These sports and entertainments continued for eight days before the lords of Burgundy and the weavers of Bruges returned to their normal employments. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀



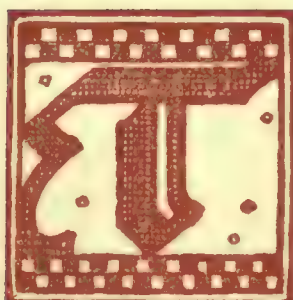


CHURCH OF ST. WALBURGE

FURNES







HERE are scores of villages and small towns in the Franc of Bruges, and each one carries its contribution of tradition and legend towards the history of Flanders. Loo was the home of that treacherous prince William of Loo, brother to Henry Beauclerk, who might have sat on the throne that was rightfully his had he been less crafty. And in Loo stood until recent years a cedar so old that local gossip swore that Julius Cæsar used it as his horse post. Lisseweghe with its huge church and the remains of the Abbey of Ter Doest has already been referred to. Vire was pillaged by the Gueux. Uitkerke, more fortunate, was able to preserve its treasures of glass and metal. Mael, outside the Porte Ste. Croix of Bruges, is the site of a fortress which gave its name to the last descendant of Baldwin of Constantinople. It was also the home of Thomas à Becket when he fled from the wrath of Henry of Anjou. In the thick woods of Winendael Mary of Burgundy's horse was frightened by a wild boar, and the fatal injuries of its mistress placed a Habsburg prince upon the Flemish throne and changed the history of the world. Thorout received its name as forest of the god Thor. Tillegheem was famous for game, and also for the well where Becket slaked his thirst. Eccloo possessed a renowned abbey. At

Ghistelles St. Godeliva was killed by her husband. The list can be indefinitely extended. ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿

Dixmude remains "a pretty and agreeable little town" as Guicciardini described it centuries ago. Once a strongly fortified city, its walls were washed by the sea. The sea has long since receded, Dixmude has lost its fortifications, and all its prosperity has vanished. The little city can boast of orderly and dignified streets, fine buildings and open spaces, a church with a rood-screen unequalled in the whole of Flanders—but it cannot boast of life or activity. "Here," added Guicciardini in the sixteenth century, "is to be found the best butter in all the Low Countries." And the pastures of Dixmude are the chief source of its present contentment. ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿

Roulers has also suffered, but not in equal degree. War and pestilence have entered its gates again and again. But Roulers has gradually become a flourishing commercial centre, and, despite its manufactures, has not wholly lost the charm of its past. Few of the old buildings have been destroyed, and the beautiful tower of St. Michael would give glory to a larger town. ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿

Lombartzyde, once a rich maritime city, is now nothing but a forgotten village, saved from utter extinction by the memory of the miracle-working "Virgin of Lombartzyde." Nieuport retains its old dignity through all its successive sieges and tribulations. But it has not been able to preserve its former prosperity. The air of Nieuport is oppressively sad. The Grande Place contains a picturesque Hôtel de Ville with a slight tower ornamented by the most graceful of tourelles. There is a Gothic church, and a belfry with a fascinating baroque steeple. ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿

Nieuport is so close to the sea that the salt bites the lips, and the sound of the storm may almost be heard in the market-place. The Templars built a watch-tower on the dunes. To-day the Cloth Hall is as empty and as valueless as the donjon. The wide cobbled streets lead to an aimless future. Nieuport is a little city of fine buildings and tall trees. Outside its walls Prince Maurice of Nassau and the Dutch defeated the Archduke Albert four hundred and fifteen years ago. A quaint engraving gives the history of the battle in a glance. On the right the Spanish march from Ostend; square formations of infantry, with pikes such as we see in Velazquez's "Surrender of





CHURCH OF ST. NICHOLAS

DIXMUDE





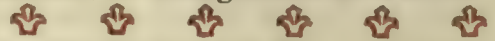
Breda" ; cavalry advancing at the gallop with gay pennons floating from their lances ; heavy ordnance, cannon and demi-cannon dragged into position by a score of horses. The companies are carefully inscribed with their names—Walloons, Spanish, Italians, swashbuckling musketeers. On the left the Dutch ford the canal which connects Nieuport with the sea. Here are French and English as well as men from Utrecht and the cities of Zealand. Off the shore floats a fleet "portans les munitions."

✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿  
"Comrades !" cried Prince Maurice to his brave men. "On one side is the enemy, on the other, the ocean. You must either pass over the body of the foe, or drink all the water behind you. Choose !" No wonder the Archduke had a moment of hesitation when he looked across the sand and saw this resolute host. The statholder had six pieces of ordnance which he kept on firm soil. The Spanish had but four, and at each detonation they became planted still deeper in the sand. Late in the afternoon, as the sun was dropping in the sea, Maurice threw a reserve of three hundred fresh cavalry upon the Spanish, and the day was won. That evening Prince Maurice supped in Nieuport with his prisoner the Admiral of Arragon. Huge fires blazed along the dunes and cast their dancing flames over the water, whilst the victorious soldiers boiled their pots and stripped the bodies of the dead.

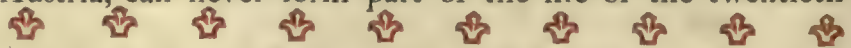
✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿  
From Nieuport to Furnes is the shortest of walks by the side of the canal which runs to Loo. There was an age when Furnes was a city greater than Courtray or even Ypres. Now its streets are as deserted as those of Nieuport, and its beautiful Grande Place an emptiness. This city, forgotten by the outside world, is distinguished by a majesty which is not to be found in all the cities of Flanders, the majesty of repose in death. To some extent this quiet dignity may be ascribed to the grandiose church of St. Walburge, consecrated in the ninth century, and fostered by Count Baldwin Bras-de-fer. Furnes has not altogether lost the faint aroma of its Spanish days. The steep gables and high roofs hide silent chambers rich in Cordovan leather and marvellous Flemish carving. But the sunshine which beams through the mullioned casements cannot revive the faded gold of the figured patterns or illuminate the black corners of rooms which conceal many a tragedy.

✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿

Furnes was, and still is, a proud city. Albert and Isabella of Austria held solemn court behind these walls. The Hôtel de Ville, pilastered and pinnacled, shows that the living spirit of the renaissance passed this way to regularise the freakish imaginations of the Gothic craftsmen. Every part of the city is dominated by the huge silhouette of the unfinished church, which rises above the houses, amidst flying buttresses and crocketed towers, like the shapeless body of an extinct monster. St. Walburge is a choir without nave or transepts, a huge monument which was never suffered to take form. When the light wanes Furnes becomes mediævally sombre, fit background for a scene of incantation or necromancy.



This fantastic atmosphere, the atmosphere of a story by Poe or a poem by Baudelaire, is intensified by the annual performance of a mystery which comes straight from the Middle Ages. The last Sunday in July is the anniversary of the day when Robert, Count of Flanders and King of Jerusalem, brought to the church of St. Walburge a fragment of the true cross. For nearly eight centuries the citizens have marched in company to commemorate the acquisition of so precious a relic, and the Procession of Penitents has become one of the most extraordinary popular observances in Flanders. Late in the day the gates of the vast church open and an endless band of pious actors emerge to walk through the streets. Surrounded by the Roman centurions Our Lord struggles beneath the weight of the Cross. Behind him follow St. Veronica and the Magdalen, the Apostles, and the Holy Family. All the incidents of the Passion are portrayed. The peasantry assemble from the neighbouring towns, and, as the procession passes, drop on their knees and tell their beads. Many of the respective characters are played by members of the same family, the rôles being handed down from father to son for generations. When the Cross has been dragged back to the portals of the church and the actors have locked up their clothes in the sacristy they sit in the Hôtel de la Noble Rose or the Cabaret de Trois Rois and discuss the wonders of the day. Men who gossip of "mysteries," in the gloom of taverns which date from the days of Henry Tudor and the Archdukes of Austria, can never form part of the life of the twentieth century.



From Furnes the Loo canal flows south until it joins the Yser, and,





THE BROLL TOREN

COURTRAY





on a tributary of that river, the Yperlet, stands the phantom city of Ypres, once the capital of Western Flanders, a stronghold of infinite wealth and importance. Ypres is one of the birthplaces of freedom. In the thirteenth century the merchants carried their swords and asserted their equality with the nobles of Flanders. They elected their own magistrates. They opened the first free schools known in history. They built a communal hall which for size and glory of architecture has no equal. Had they only been able to agree amongst themselves the citizens of Ypres might have accumulated greater treasure. But civil revolution, plague, the jealousy of Bruges and Ghent, the ferocity of foreign conquerors, completed a ruin which could not destroy such gigantic evidences of departed grandeur. ✠ The first stone of the great cloth hall and its magnificent tower was laid by Baldwin, Count of Flanders and Emperor of Constantinople. The hall is Byzantine in size though not in style. The sweeping lines of its splendid façade, the pointed arches of its double range of windows with their trefoiled and quatrefoiled heads, the battlements carried on sculptured corbels, the crested roof with its angled pinnacles, and the great belfry with its octangular spire—this is the inspiration of genius. ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠

In the open square Philip van Artevelde addressed the citizens of Ypres on the eve of the fatal battle of Roosbeke. He preached a cheerful optimism. The French would never be able to cross the Lys or break into Flanders. "Good people," he cried from his platform, "do not be alarmed. If the King of France should march against us he will fail to get over the river Lys. I have had all the passes well guarded. I have ordered Peter van den Bossche to Comines with a large body of men. He is a loyal man, and one who loves the honour of Flanders. I have sent Peter de Wintere to Warneton, and broken down the bridges on the Lys, and there is neither pass nor ford but these two. Our friends in England are coming to help us. Keep therefore to the oaths sworn in the good city of Ghent. And now let those who will maintain the rights and freedom of Flanders hold up their hands." ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠

The crowd lifted their right hands and swore anew to stand by their leader. Philip van Artevelde was a popular general, of much military expedient. When he assaulted recalcitrant cities he made use of an

immense mortar the report of which was so loud "that it seemed as if all the devils in hell had broken loose." He constructed engines, forty feet long and twenty wide, to batter down walls and demolish ramparts. One was named "The Sow," another "The Sheep." They were able to sling masses of rock, bolts and bars of copper hot from the furnace.

✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠  
Unfortunately the French succeeded in crossing the Lys at Comines, and the savage Bretons swept through the wretched town, looting as they went and butchering the inhabitants on the steps of the altar. Within a few days Charles VI was at St. Eloi, outside Ypres, and the citizens trembled for their safety. Leliaert and Clauwaert rose in tumult and fought for the mastery. The French section gained the supremacy, and Ypres capitulated without fighting. The French king levied a heavy fine, and beheaded the governor and the ruling burghers on the bridge of Ypres. But the city itself was saved. Then he pressed on to the dreadful field of Roosbeke outside Courtray. ✠  
Eighty years had passed since the Battle of the Golden Spurs. In 1302 the victorious Flemings utterly defeated all the chivalry of France. Taking careful advantage of the opportunities afforded by the marshes, they enticed the armoured knights into a quagmire which engulfed them. Then Breidel's men advanced with poleaxe and pike, making horrible use of that weapon edged with steel and satirically called a Goedendag or "Good Morning."

✠ ✠ ✠ ✠  
"Montjoie and St. Denis!" shouted the men of France as they rushed to their doom. Chivalry was for the first time defeated by artizans, weavers, butchers, common people. When the news of the Battle of Courtray was spread across Europe feudalism itself was weakened. The townsmen of Bordeaux and Toulouse rose in open rebellion. Florence and the Italian communes commenced to federate. Hainaut, Liège, and Brabant yearned for a new freedom. The spurs of the dead knights were preserved in the church of St. Martin at Courtray, and signalized not only a victory over the French but defiance of kingship itself. This Charles VI did not forget in 1382. ✠ ✠  
Roosbeke was fought on the Thursday before Advent. Flanders was struggling not only against its suzerain, the King of France, but also against its own lawful lord, Louis of Maele. Van Artevelde commanded an army of some sixty thousand men. On November 26th





OLD WOODEN HOUSE

YPRES





he entertained all his officers at a sumptuous banquet and prophesied victory for the morrow. At midnight there was a sudden alarm. Scouts were sent out who reported that all was quiet. The noise was the imagination of their brains. "Some said it was the devils of hell running and dancing about the place where the battle was to be, because of the great prey they expected there." ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

At daybreak the country was covered by a thick mist. When the fog lifted the two armies faced each other. "It was a fine sight to view those banners, helmets, and beautiful emblazoned arms: the French army kept a dead silence, not uttering a sound, but eyed the heavy 'battle' of Flemings before them, who were marching in a compact body, with their staves advanced in the air, which looked like spears, and so great were their numbers, they had the appearance of a wood." At the first shock the French were driven backwards, but the two wings closed in, and the Flemings were pressed so closely together that they could not raise their arms. In the mud they commenced to slip and fall. Philip van Artevelde was overborne and suffocated beneath a heap of slain. "And as the Flemynges were beaten downe, there were pages redy to cut their throtes with great knyves, and so slewe them without pytie, as though they had bene but dogges." About 25,000 men fell in the battle and during the pursuit. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Courtray was now at the mercy of the French. No defence was offered. Froissart tells the tale of the fate of the city. "The burgesses and their wyves, and all other men, women, and chyldren, entered into cellars, and into the churches, to flye fro the deth, so that it was pytie to se it. Suche as entred Courtray had great profyte by pyllage . . . for ther was no man taken to mercy." ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Charles VI was not fifteen years of age, but he was old enough to exercise the functions of a king according to all the rules of the Middle Ages. Philip van Artevelde's body was suspended on a gallows. "It was shewed the Kynge (writes Froissart) howe that there was in Courtray, in the Church of Oure Lady, a chapell, wherein were fyve hundred gylte spurres, parteyninge of olde tyme to the lordes and knyghtes of Fraunce, suche as had bene slayne at the sayde batayle of Courtray; the whiche was in the yere of Oure Lorde God a thousande thre hundred and two: and they of Courtray oncs a yere made

thereof a great triumphe and solempnyte. Wherefore the Kyng sayd it shulde be derely bought : and so it was after, for at his departynge he sette the Towne a fyre, to the entent that it shulde be knowne ever after, howe that the Frenche Kynge had bene there." ❀ ❀  
Louis of Maele, Count of Fländers, did not long survive the destruction of one of the fairest cities in his kingdom. Within three months he had joined his fathers. And the old chroniclers affirm that on the night of his death a terrible hurricane swept over Flanders without bending a single tree or doing the slightest damage. The bodies on the gibbets still hanging from the Battle of Roosbeke, shook and twisted with glee, for the demons of hell were hurrying past with the soul of the last Count of Flanders in their grip. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀







**G**HENT St. Amandus and St. Bavon founded two churches at the junction of the Lys and the Scheldt, they selected a site which possessed every essential of commercial importance. The decadence of Bruges towards the close of the twelfth century gradually increased the trade of Ghent, until one city completely superseded the other. Froissart wrote in his Chronicles: "You know, if you have been in Flanders, that the

town of Ghent is the sovereign town of Flanders for power, counsel, lordship, situation, and all that one can imagine as belonging to a good and noble town; and that three great rivers serve it, bearing ships to go throughout the world. The largest is the river Scheldt, and then the river Lys, and then the Lievre, for it brings ships to them and great profit, inasmuch as it connects them with Sluys and Damme, whence many articles that come by sea get to them. Down the Scheldt come the corn of Hainaut and the wine of France, down the Lys plenty of corn from Artois and the surrounding districts." That description remained true throughout the Middle Ages. Ghent was near the sea. Waterways connected it with the chief towns of Flanders. The high road led to the capital of Brabant and all the industrial cities of Germany.

In 1520 Albert Dürer found Ghent "a beautiful and prodigious city." Fate was kind in selecting it as the birthplace of Charles V. The

emperor never forgot that he was a citizen of one of the capitals of Europe. "Je mettrais Paris dans mon Gant," he told Francis I. Even a great prince cannot rise superior to a mean jest. Pitiless Alva suggested that Ghent should be destroyed as a punishment for its rebellion against the imperial forces. The emperor took his stern captain to the highest parapet of the Belfry. Pointing to the towers, steeples, and gabled roofs, he asked : "How many pieces of Spanish leather, think you, would be needed to make a glove of that size ?" And Ghent was saved from destruction by a bad pun. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

The soul of a city is as hard to classify as the soul of an individual. There are a thousand distracting influences to investigate, factors which must not be overlooked, intricate problems we can never wholly solve. Yet cities have souls, as old houses have often a mysterious air of the still living past, an atmosphere we are bound to admit without being able to describe. The two cities of Bruges and Ghent are parted by a few brief miles of Flemish plain. Their histories run much upon identical lines, an endless struggle between feudalism and freedom. The citizens of Ghent were notorious for the vehemence of their language and the obstinacy of their character. They were, wrote Guicciardini, great politicians, severe in manner, and ready for war ; and also, added another observer, "adonnée à tous les plaisirs à quoi l'homme est enclin et aux plus grans pompes et despenses." Supporters of the old order, like Philip de Commines, could see no good in "ceste ville de Gand, dont tant est advenu de maux, et qui est de si peu d'utile pour le pays et la chose publique." As soon as one wishes to force them, said Sanderus, they become harder than stone. Thus the story of Ghent is as turbulent as that of Bruges. The weavers, fullers, brewers, and butchers of the one town were no more peacefully inclined than their fellow-guildsmen of the other. All owed allegiance to the same lords, worshipped at the same shrines. Yet Ghent is radically different from Bruges. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ In the Belfry at Ghent hung a bell which was named after Charlemagne's boldest paladin. On it was inscribed in Flemish :

Mynen naem ist Roelant, als ick clippe dans ist brant  
Als icke luyde, dan ist storm in Vlaenderlandt.

("My name is Roland. When I ring softly there is fire.  
But when I ring loudly there are enemies in Flandersland.")





BELFRY AND TOWN HALL

GHENT





The rough verse breathes the true spirit of Flemish independence. When Roland sounded from its eyrie the Gantois buckled on their arms and sharpened their "goedendags." Charles V broke up Roland after his occupation of Ghent in 1540, but he could not destroy the old civic spirit which blazed anew whenever Ghent was menaced by danger. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Indeed the call of the past is so strong and so insistent, courses with such living force through our veins, that not even the most powerful sovereign can ever suspend its inspiration. The Belfry of Ghent was an everlasting monument of an unconquered community. On the summit of the spire swings the figure of a golden dragon, as large as a bull, made of plates of gilt copper on an iron frame. Count Baldwin brought it to Bruges in 1204, probably plunder from St. Sophia in Constantinople. In 1382 the Gantois defeated the men of Bruges, and removed the fantastic beast from the Belfry at Bruges to their own steeple. To this day the golden dragon remains a symbol of victory. In a corner of the ruined chapel of St. Bavon stands the "Warrior of the Belfry," clad in ringed mail, with hand on sword. He, with three brothers, stood at the corners of the parapet for five hundred years. Armed cap-à-pie, they guarded the city, gazing resolutely to the four points of the compass, searching the horizon for any enemy who might be creeping towards the walls of Ghent. Between them silent Roland, above them the golden dragon of Constantinople, beneath them the busy market. With such a guard, how could the citizens lack self-confidence in their destiny? ❀ ❀

The Belfry at Ghent was planned in 1183 and completed about 1320. Around it are grouped the cathedral church of St. Bavon, the Hôtel de Ville, the churches of St. Nicholas and St. Michael, the "Steen" of Gerard the Devil, and the almost shapeless mass of the Château of the Counts of Flanders. Under the sun the rivers and canals, the Scheldt, the Lys, the Lievre, the Moere, shine like streaks of burnished metal. There are two hundred bridges in Ghent, joining gloomy and narrow lanes to large squares and pleasant gardens. Yet all the water in these motionless streams will never wash away the stains of the blood that has poured down the cobbled gutters; all the gay blossoms of these multi-coloured flower-beds cannot hide the memory of the crimes which have been enacted on this black soil. ❀

When the Warriors of the Belfry were first placed in their exalted position, Jacques van Artevelde was the first citizen in Ghent. The story of the two Van Arteveldes belongs to the history of Europe rather than that of Ghent. Their influence was more than local. The most picturesque portrait of the father is to be found in the glowing pages of Froissart. "In this season there was great dyscorde bytwene the erle of Flaunders and the Flemmynges : for they wolde nat obey him, nor he durst nat abyde in Flaunders, but in great parell. And in the towne of Gaunt, there was a man, a maker of honey, called Jaques Dartvell. He was entred into such fortune and grace of the people, that all thyng was done that he bydde ; he might commaunde what he wolde through all Flaunders, for ther was non, though he were never so great, that durst disobey his commaundement. He had alwayes goyng with hym up and downe in Gaunt lx. or fourscore varlettes armed, and amonge them, there were thre or foure that knewe the secretnes of his mynde ; so that if he mette a persone that he hated, or had hym in suspectyon, incontynent he was slayne : for he had commaunded his secret varlettes, that whanne soever he mette any persone, and made suche a sygne to theym, that incontynent they shulde slee hym, whatsoever he were, without any wordes or resonyng; and by that meanes he made many to be slayne, wherby he was so doughted, that none durst speke agaynst any thyng that he wolde have done, so that every man was gladde to make hym good chere. . . . To speke properly, there was never in Flaunders, nor in none other contrey, prince, duke, nor other, that ruled a countrey so pesably, so long as this Jaques Dartvel dyd rule Flaunders."

Froissart describes Jacques van Artevelde as "a maker of honey," and it is also said that he was a brewer. Undoubtedly he was a cloth merchant, for his name was inscribed on the roll of the weavers' guild. But he was no poor craftsman. His father had been on an embassy to the Duke of Brabant, had also attended the court of Charles the Fair, had been able to lend money to the Count of Flanders, was in fact a member of the commercial nobility—the "milites burgenses." The son had travelled on military service under Charles de Valois into Sicily and Greece, and probably visited Rome during the papacy of Boniface VIII.



Upon the death of Louis "le Hutin" of France (June 1316) Van Artevelde, who had already been appointed "Varlet de la Fruiterie" to the king, retired to his family estates at Triest, Mendonck, and Basserode. Not until 1337 was he elected one of the five magistrates of Ghent which was expecting an early siege from its count. King of France and Count of Flanders could not subdue the obstinacy or disturb the policy of the citizens. Jacques van Artevelde and the other Flemish deputies entered into treaty obligations with Edward III of England, their main object being to secure an adequate supply of English wool for their looms. Intrigue followed intrigue. Edward III, Van Artevelde, Philip of France, and Louis of Crécy played their forces against each other. The cities and Franc of Flanders were not at one purpose. Bruges pitted itself against Ghent, Leliaert plotted against Clauwaert. Roland rang out from the Belfry, and the citizens stood daily under arms. Towns and villages were fired by the opposing armies, and, writes Froissart, "it was a fine sight to see the banners and pennons flying in the plain, the barbed horses, the knights and esquires richly armed." There were other sights less pleasant. The garrison of Cambray entered the unfortified town of Haspres. "Having taken and pillaged what they pleased, they burnt the town so completely that nothing but the walls remained."

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On November 1339 Edward III was in Ghent with Philippa of Hainaut. During the king's absence in England Queen Philippa gave birth to a son known as John of Gaunt, "time honour'd Lancaster." And she acted as godmother to the eldest son of Jacques von Artevelde, who was christened in her honour Philip. The two fathers were soon campaigning against the French monarch. After a siege of seventy-two days outside Tournay a truce was arranged. Philip of Valois and Louis of Crécy forgave their rebellious subjects, whilst Edward III borrowed large sums of money from the rich Flemings and made liberal arrangements for the sale of English wool to the Flemish weavers. After some further brief hostilities Flanders entered upon a short period of extreme prosperity. ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠  
Ghent was primarily a manufacturing city, whilst the energies of the merchants of Bruges were more devoted to general trade and interchange. Van Artevelde in those early days of the fourteenth century

showed that he fully understood upon what foundations it was necessary to build an industrial state. He created a pure currency. The bed of the Lievre was deepened so that easy communication with the sea might be maintained. The city was divided into two hundred and fifty districts. Each district was put under the care of a "deken" (doyen, or superintendent). When the tocsin rang every citizen knew his place under his "deken." The citizens were also divided into three classes. The "poorters" were privileged to elect the chief magistrate. The weavers were some forty thousand strong, a quarrelsome section for ever at variance with their fellow-men and always at open enmity with the fullers. The third class were called the "neringhen," and included the fifty-two minor crafts. ❀ ❀

As Flanders was largely dependent upon foreign countries for corn, every vessel freighted with foreign produce was compelled to devote a certain tonnage to wheat. Flanders itself was divided into three military centres, with Ghent, Bruges, and Ypres as headquarters. The weakness of the administration of Ghent was in its selfishness. Van Artevelde, to quote one of his biographers, thought less of Flanders than of Ghent, and less of Ghent than of the prosperity of the woollen manufactures. "He would not have hesitated to slay with his own hand a respectable, industrious fellow-countryman if he presumed to work a loom without belonging to the weavers' guild in one of the good towns. Nor would he have scrupled to raze to the ground any town or hamlet that encroached upon the charters granted to Bruges, Ghent, and Ypres." Certain cities possessed a monopoly of the sale of woollen fabrics, and this monopoly was rigidly and pitilessly enforced. In 1344 the artizans of Poperinghe endeavoured to assert a right to sell the excess of their woollen products after supplying their own needs. Immediately the citizens of Ypres marched forth, and, after a sanguinary battle with the unfortunate weavers of Poperinghe, destroyed all the looms, not only in that small town, but also in Bailleul, Langhemark, and Reninghelst. ❀ There was not only jealousy between rival towns, but enmity between rival guilds. On a day in May 1345, known for centuries as "den quaden maendag," the fullers and the weavers met in savage conflict on the Marché du Vendredi. Even though the priests intervened, holding aloft the Consecrated Wafer, they could not part the com-



batants. Five hundred were left dead upon the ground, and the supremacy of the fullers was extinguished for ever. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ But as a rule the guilds of the fourteenth century lived in unison, and were able to wield an almost despotic power over their members. An artizan could not transfer his labour from one master to another without leave of the corporation. A master was permitted to employ a certain number of men, and no others. Foreign workmen, those who could not claim the privilege of the city, were rarely permitted to exercise their craft. Stern regulations ensured that every apprentice was properly taught and adequately housed. His service varied from three to six years, and, at the completion of his time, some guilds required proof of his skill. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ A volume would not contain the innumerable and minute rules which guarded the operations of the looms. No detail was forgotten, and the surveillance was unsleeping. All cloth had to be inspected by officers of the guilds before it could be placed upon sale. Inferior material was rejected, and the spinner who spoilt his piece was punished by a fine. Prices were fixed by statute, and wages had to be paid in coin, and not in goods. Hours of work were strictly defined. No man was allowed to work on a feast day or the eve of a feast, on a Sunday, or the eve of a Sunday. The man who worked below the standard wage was fined, and the master who employed him was suspended for a year. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ Morals also came before the ruling members of the guilds. The corporation of tanners in Bruges suspended for two weeks a workman who had called another "liar." Quarrels were punished by three weeks' suspension. Jean van Beverne, a fruiterer of Ghent, was forbidden his trade because of an informality in his matrimonial arrangements. Carpenters who neglected to pay their debts were penalized. Every guild had its chapel, its hospital, its charitable funds, and its tavern or "herberg." The system was complete, and there was no loophole for any man to break free. Food was cheap, and wages high, rent a negligible quantity. The artizan spent his wages day to day, but when work ceased he starved. He did not fail to note that the rich became more grinding as they amassed increased wealth. The poets of the people preached a doctrine that the fruits of the earth should be more equally distributed. "God, who has done everything

so rationally," wrote Van Maerlant in his Flemish verse, "created this beautiful earth for the benefit of humanity in common. But now greed is so furious that each man has but one desire—to possess everything for himself alone." ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

It is not surprising that the artizans and craftsmen of Ghent watched with envious eyes the increasing importance of the man they had themselves raised to the highest seat in the city. Democracy, perhaps naturally, is ever suspicious of its leaders. Froissart gives a vivid account of the magnificence of Jacques van Artevelde and his princely pomp. He was surrounded by a bodyguard of "zweerd draegers," clad in red with striped sleeves. These sword-bearers were at times a necessary protection. The Leliaerts accused Van Artevelde of conspiring to rule Flanders as a military dictator. Although his friends rallied from Bruges, Ypres, and Courtray, the Captain of Ghent was thrown into the prisons of the Steen of Gerard the Devil until his innocence was established. But when a rumour spread that Van Artevelde had sold Flanders for English gold, and had proposed to transfer the overlordship from Louis of Crécy to the Black Prince, son of Edward III, the citizens of Ghent did not wait to investigate its truth. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Jacques van Artevelde returned to Ghent on a Sunday evening in July, after a visit to Bruges and Ypres. "As he rode through the strete, he parceyved that ther was some newe mater agaynst hym, for he sawe such as were wonte to make reverence to hym as he came by, he sawe theym tourne their backes toward hym and entre into their houses. Than he began to doute ; and assone as he was alyghted in his lodgyng, he closed fast his gates, doores and wyndose : this was scante done, but all the strete was full of men, and specially of them of the small craftes : ther they assayled his house bothe behynde and before, and the house broken up ; he and his within the house defended themselfe a longe space, and slewe and hurt many without ; but finally he coude not endure, for thre partes of the men of the towne were at that assaut." He tried to escape from the rear of his house, but the mob held all the exits. Making for the stables, he was quickly surrounded. Thomas Denys, a cobbler, is said to have struck the blow which felled him to the ground. "Thus Jaques Dartvell endedde his dayes, who had ben a great maister in Flanders : poore





PALAIS DES ARCHIVES

MALINES





men first mounteth up, and unhappy men sleeth them at the ende. These tidynges anone spredde abroad the countrey : some were sorie therof and some were gladde." ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Other captains of the city succeeded Jacques van Artevelde. The post carried great honour, and considerable danger. Froissart tells us of one captain "that it cost hym his lyfe, and I shall tell you howe. The Gauntoyse went and tooke him in his lodgyng, and so brought hym into the street, and there he was stricken all to peces, so that every man bare away a pece of hym." On August 26, 1346, eleven months after the murder of Van Artevelde, Edward III defeated the French at Creçy. Louis of Creçy was found amongst the slain, and his son, Louis of Maele, became the next Count of Flanders at the age of sixteen. The men of Flanders wished their lord to marry the daughter of the King of England. Louis was formally betrothed to the Princess Isabella at the Abbey of St. Winoc. But a fortnight before the day fixed for the marriage he rode out to fly a hawk at his château of Maele. Here again Froissart tells the story. "The falconer flew his hawk at a heron, and the Count did the same with his. The two hawks chased their quarry, and the Count galloped off as if following them, crying Hoy ! Hoy ! When he was at some distance from his guards, and in the open fields, he drove his spurs into his horse, and made such speed that he was soon out of sight ; nor did he stop till he got into Artois, where he was safe." The English accused him "of betraying and deceiving them." The Princess Isabella protested that as she had been betrothed she was entitled to bear the arms of Flanders. War swept over the land. "There was shotyng of gonnes and crossbowes on both parties, wherby dyvers were slayne and wounded ; and right well the Gauntoyse dyd acquyte themselfe." ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

To war succeeded pestilence. The Black Death entered Flanders at the port of Sluys. The plague had slowly travelled from the east of Asia by way of Egypt, Armenia, and Greece, until it sucked the very life out of Europe. From Pisa it extended to Avignon and Montpellier, turned north until even Iceland was not exempt from its ravages. In Paris some 50,000 persons are said to have perished, in London the number was as great, in the city of Norwich even more were attacked. The towns of Flanders lost half their popula-

tion. In Tournay alone there were 25,000 deaths. The land was depopulated. The magistrates implored "the citizens of all ranks to lay aside their petty squabbles and disputes, and to humble themselves before the wrath of an offended Heaven. No shops were suffered to be opened on Sunday, nor was the name of the Deity taken even to attest legal and official acts. Dice were shorn of their angles and, rounded into beads, were strung together as chaplets." Mourning was forbidden. Then came the Flagellants. The sect had been born in Hungary, and, after passing through Germany, reached its most hysterical development in Flanders. In France they obtained no hold of the population, "for the King had strickly forbidden them by desire of the Pope, who disapproved of such conduct for sound and sensible reasons." And, continues Froissart, "all clerks or persons holding livings, that countenanced them were excommunicated, and several were forced to go to Rome to purge themselves." ✠ The hysterical fanaticism of the Flagellants found an eager adherence in a people naturally inclined towards mysticism. Half-naked processions of men and women swayed through the streets of the Flemish cities, scourging themselves with cords terminating in rough iron points. Their dismal chants commemorated Our Lord's martyrdom. They believed that the blood which streamed from their wounds mingled in a mysterious manner with that of the Christ who died in expiation on the Cross. At night they journeyed from one town to another by the light of torches. The mendicant friars who accompanied the penitents were clothed in long robes which reached to their feet, and on their cowls was embroidered a red cross. Such ecstatic emotionalism could only have one result. Whilst the plague lasted the Flagellants were a moral example. Directly the plague abated, all restraint was thrown aside. Wild kermesse, "la terrible joie flamande," to borrow Verhaeren's phrase, reigned in every city of the plain over the new graves of the victims of the Black Death. ✠ By the end of the fourteenth century Ghent, despite its advanced civilization and extreme wealth, was reverting to a condition of anarchy. Men recalled the days of Jacques van Artevelde, and Philip, his son, was sworn in as chief captain of the city. The fight between Philip and Louis of Maele, between Ghent and Bruges, where commercial rivalry had reached its bitterest pitch, continued for years.



At one moment Ghent was besieged and starved. The city was at the mercy of its lord. Peace could be had upon terms. All the inhabitants of Ghent, between the ages of fifteen and sixty, were to come forth bareheaded and in their shirts, with halters round their necks. At Buscampveld, midway between Bruges and Ghent, Louis of Maele consented to receive them and declare how many he would pardon, how many he would put to death. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Ghent was starving. Thirty thousand men and women had not touched bread for a fortnight. "In a few days," declared Peter van den Bossche, "the town of Ghent shall be the most honoured town in Christendom, or the most humbled." Three courses were open. They might shut their gates and starve to death. Or they might throw themselves on the mercy of Louis of Maele. The third alternative was heroic. Five thousand of the boldest citizens should march to Bruges and engage the Count in battle. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

The last scheme was selected. That night the little army stole out of the town. Bruges, after much feasting, sallied forth, a disorderly mass, to meet the famished invaders. The Gantois fought with the fury of despair. Louis of Maele was put to flight and Philip van Artevelde sat in his palace. "As long as he abode in Bruges he kept the estate of a prince, for every day he had playenge at his lodging dore, mynstrels, dyner and supper, and was served in vessell of sylver, as thogh he had been the erle of Flaunders. And well he myght kepe than that estate, for he had all the erles vessell, golde and sylver, and all his jeowels founde in his house at Bruges: ther was nothyng saved." The château at Maele was looted. The golden dragon from the summit of the Belfry was taken down and set up in Ghent. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Philip van Artevelde's triumph was short. His victory at Beverhoutsveld was followed by defeat and death at Roosbeke. His body was found in a ditch and taken to the French king, who commanded that it should be hanged from a tree. Courtray was committed to the flames and formed a fitting funeral pyre to one of the greatest men Flanders has ever counted amongst her sons. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀



HARLES-QUINT was born at Ghent on February 24, 1500. The date itself marks the close of the Middle Ages and the commencement of modern history. The babe was fated to become the most powerful sovereign in Christendom since the days of Charlemagne. ♣ ♣

His father was son of Maximilian and the unfortunate Mary of Burgundy who had died so prematurely in the Princenhof at Bruges. Philip

the Handsome was married to Juana, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. One child, a daughter, had been born to them at Brussels. With but a single weak life intervening their son was heir to all Spain and the Low Countries. When Maximilian died the imperial throne was vacant. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

It is somewhat difficult to account for the extreme enthusiasm which greeted the arrival of the little prince. Envoys were despatched to all the courts of Europe. Every village in the Low Countries celebrated the event with carnival. In Ghent the bells were kept ringing for days, and bonfires were burnt on all the towers and steeples. The rejoicing culminated on the day of baptism, when Margaret of York carried her great-grandchild to the font of St. Bavon. The rite took place between the hours of nine and ten at night. Every window in the city was illuminated. Ten thousand torches blazed before the



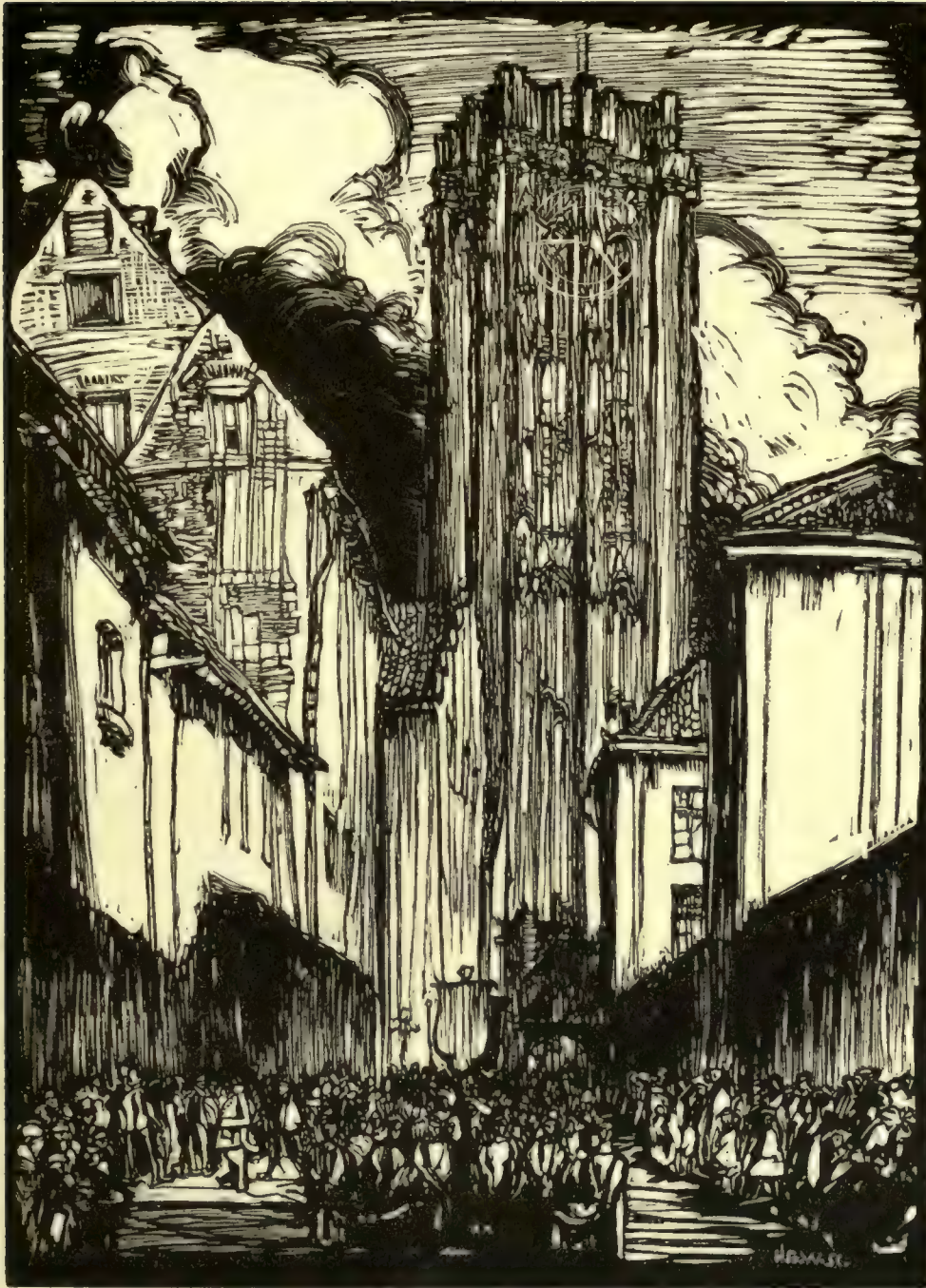
pomp and heraldry of the House of Austria. The archduke's colours, yellow and blue, floated over every house. Ropes were suspended from the parapet of the Belfry to the tower of St. Nicholas, and on them were fastened garlands of paper lanterns, so that (in the words of an old writer) the city itself appeared to be on fire. The golden dragon on the summit of the Belfry spouted forth great fire. Never had such sights been seen in Ghent. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

The procession to the cathedral was characteristic of the love of ceremony innate in the Flemish race. Hundreds of the lesser nobility walked in line carrying flambeaux. The great lords of Flanders and Brabant surrounded the child. The church was covered with the richest tapestry. After the act of baptism the babe was solemnly created, chevalier and Duke of Luxemburg. Treasures of gold and precious stones were presented to his cradle. Then the procession returned through the thronged streets. Esquires walking on each side of the prince scattered handfuls of gold and silver medals amongst the crowd. The merchants threw money from their balconies to the rabble which scrambled and fought in the gutters. The child alone slept unconscious through the cries and shouts, the bells, the trumpets, the discharge of cannon. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

The youth of Charles was spent in the peace of the city of Malines. It was not a large town, some eight thousand inhabitants, in the early sixteenth century. The huge mass of the cathedral of St. Rombaut stood black against the sky as it stands to-day. No city in Belgium is so rich in quaint mansions, and Mechlin has altered little since Charles and his sisters played beneath the unfinished tower which broods over the whole of northern Flanders. The "Schepenhuis," or House of the Sheriffs, was old when the boy studied its curious outlines. Built in the fourteenth century, the smaller building by its side was even more ancient. From 1474 to 1618 the Old Palace was the headquarters of the Great Council of Malines, and there came a time when the young emperor in all his glory was entertained within these walls by the men who had watched him grow into manhood. And the Palais de Justice of the present age was the home of Margaret of Austria, Regent of the Low Countries, built for her use in 1507. In these grave rooms the child was taught his duty as a man. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

Father and mother he rarely saw. The archduke Philip was but twenty-two at the birth of his son, handsome, skilful at sports and games, liberal minded, and inclined to the display of much pomp and magnificence. "He was so familiar with all the world that he sometimes forgot the decorum due to royalty. He loved justice, and saw that it was properly administered. He was religious, and kept his word. He was gifted with a rare intelligence, was able to learn the most difficult things with facility. But he was not prompt in decision, he lacked resolution, and he was naturally inclined to rely upon the advice of the people he liked." Such was the verdict of a Venetian ambassador. There was a less pleasant side to his character. He was a slave to caprice and sudden passion. He was vain, inconstant, dissolute. The slumbering madness of Juana of Spain was excited by the neglect of her husband. One story conveys some faint idea of the savagery which disturbed the even life of an imperial court in the sixteenth century. The archduke protected a girl of Brabant of marvellous beauty. The archduchess had the woman abducted and strangled, was even present at the execution of this domestic vengeance. The Middle Ages had not wholly passed away. ✠ ✠ In Malines the child was free from such evil influences. Margaret of York did not live long enough to exercise much power in the formation of his character. His aunt, the Regent, ruled him with a severity he afterwards resented. There is a portrait of this stern and practical woman, painted by Bernard van Orley, which gives some slight indication of her strength of mind and force of character. She has the strong nose and thick lips of the House of Austria. Her chin is firm, and her eyes inflexible. For twenty-three years she governed the Low Countries from her palace at Malines, living almost in complete seclusion, devoting her leisure to the collection of objects of art and the cultivation of the humanities. Her wisdom and diplomatic skill were sufficient to hold in check the French party, and to steer a middle course with a most unsteady bark of state. The child could have had no better tutelage. ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ We have the names of all the women who watched over him during infancy. His nurse was Barbe Servels, the attendants of his cradle Tosine de Nyewwerve and Marguerite de Poitiers. His first governor was the stern Henri de Witthein, lord of Beersel in Brabant, and a





CATHEDRAL OF ST. ROMBAUT

MALINES





knight of the Order of Golden Fleece. As a babe of six Charles wore round his neck the same simple insignia. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ For fifteen years Malines remained his home. Curious little pictures of the boy and his playmates have drifted down to us across the centuries. Hand in hand with his sisters he is seen dancing round a bonfire on the feast of St. John. He drove a sledge in the form of a ship with masts and flags. The city fathers of Malines gave him a couple of ponies. He marshalled his companions into companies of Turks and Christians. The archduke headed the Christian host, and the Turks were never allowed to claim the victory. He became a good shot and loved hunting to the extreme content of the Emperor Maximilian, his grandfather, for "aultrement on aursit pu penser qu'il estoit bâtard." The esquire Cenrio taught him horsemanship, and in after years his subjects in Spain thought him the most perfect horseman in the Old World. Once, upon a sporting expedition, he killed a man with his crossbow by accident. But the victim was "only an artizan, a drunkard and ill-conditioned." ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ Margaret of Austria disliked Brussels, and her nephew spent almost the whole of his youth in Malines. The Regent kept a court which eclipsed in splendour that of the King of France. Surrounded by poets, artists, and musicians, she usually appeared robed in satin and ermine, followed by a slender greyhound, a parakeet perched on her finger, a marmoset crouching on her shoulder. She presided over gorgeous feasts, heavy with the sensuous perfumes of roses, sweet marjoram, rosemary, and the vines which clustered in her aromatic groves and pleasaunces. Yet amidst this pomp of rank and birth the young archduke remained modest and unaffected. When, upon the occasion of his "Joyous Entry" into Antwerp, he was greeted by a bevy of Flemish beauties masquerading as the goddesses of mythology, whose charms were not concealed by the scanty gauzes of Elysian dress, the boy was visibly abashed, and kept his eyes fixed on the ground. The ladies were not flattered by his discomposure. They were chosen by the magistrates, and had ardently competed for this civic tribute to their grace. Dürer himself wrote: "I have rarely seen women so handsome." ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ His most important tutor was Adrian of Utrecht, who came from the university of Louvain. Charles was not an apt pupil. Latin and Greek

were almost foreign to his tongue. He spoke French, but not with elegance. German he could barely understand. Of Spanish and Italian he knew but a few words. Flemish he did not begin to learn until he was thirteen. But he was taught the clavichord, and when he retired at the end of his career to San Yuste he did not forget his instruments of music. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

The education of a prince is the principal memory that still floats through the streets of Malines. It is easy to see the pale-faced, delicate boy with the projecting Habsburg jaw surrounded by his governors, squires, and lackeys, as he rides forth from the Palace of Margaret of Austria. From Malines was issued his first imperial proclamation, in which he proudly described himself : " Charles, by the grace of God, Prince of Spain, of the Two Sicilies, of Jerusalem ; Archduke of Austria ; Duke of Burgundy, Lorraine, Brabant, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, Limberg, Luxemburg, and Gueldres ; Count of Flanders, Habsburg, Tyrol, Artois, Burgundy, the Palatine, and Hainaut ; Landgrave of Alsace ; Prince of Suabia ; Marquis of Burgau, the Holy Empire, Holland, Zealand, Ferrette, Kyburg, Namur, and Zutphen ; Count and Lord of Friseland, the Marches of Esclavonia, Pertenauf, Salins, and Malines." ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

Forty years later he died a melancholy recluse in the monastery of San Yuste. When the imperial crown had been placed upon his brow in the cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle he reigned the greatest monarch in the world. At San Yuste he could look back upon a career of disappointment and failure. And, from his cell upon those arid hills of Estramurra, he must have thought with a sorrowful regret of his boyhood in the old city of Malines. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣





IN the days when all God-fearing citizens bolted themselves in their houses at the setting of the sun the Long Wapper was the dread of Antwerp. On black nights, with the storm blowing over the heaving Scheldt from the vastness of the North Sea, only a bold or reckless man would dare to pick his way alone even from the Steen to the Vieille Boucherie—which is but a child's journey. Here and there an oil lamp swayed in the wind, or a tiny flame painfully flickered with each gust before some holy image. At such corners safety might be found. The Long Wapper, like all fiends of similar nature, could not pass in front of these objects of piety and devotion. But otherwise his dominion was extensive, despite the efforts of St. Eligius and the many angelic guardians of the city. In the Long Wapper Antwerp possessed an ill-conditioned sprite it could neither tame by ecclesiastical anathema nor exile by judicial decree. And, judging from the many stories which embroidered the uncanny theme, the good men and women of "the Burg by the river-side" were somewhat proud of their familiar demon. He was a devil with a malicious humour modern devils seem to lack. As dusk spread its wings across the skies he would tap scornfully on the windows of the churches and gibe and grin at the faithful kneeling before the last office of the day. Dared they turn their eyes from

the altar and they would catch a distracting glimpse of a blood-curdling grimace. When the priest intoned those all-embracing words "in sæcula sæculorum" a cold dread seized the hearts of the old men and ancient women who trembled in the deepening shadows. For time is indeed without end, and eternity is limitless. And these thoughts are not comforting when maybe a fiend is lurking behind the pillars of the porch, or preparing to spring from one of the buttresses in the graveyard.

✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠  
The humour of the Long Wapper varied from day to day, or rather from night to night. He could imitate the cry of a wayfarer in distress, and would wait until some charitable burgher unfastened his window. A shriek of the most poignant anguish wailed along the street. Then the samaritan would buckle on a weapon, pick up the nearest stick, and hurry to the rescue, whilst his family held the door. Suddenly, tripping over a stone, the good citizen would fall with a heavy splash in the turgid horror of the gutter. Then would the Long Wapper scream with discordant merriment, and hasten to play a like joke in another quarter of the town.

✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠  
Stretching himself to the height of the tallest houses, he would rattle the attic casements until the poor souls between the sheets froze with terror and prayed to all the saints of Flanders that dawn might swiftly glow along the edge of the horizon. He could assume various shapes. That of a foundling was a favourite disguise. Mothers discovering a piteous-faced babe moaning in a corner would put aside their offspring to succour the little flotsam of humanity. And, as they soothed and quietened its distress, the strange child would grow heavier and heavier until their arms could no longer support the burden. Then the truth would illuminate them. Dropping the bundle on the closest doorstep they would run in dismay to their gossips, crying out that they had been nursing the Long Wapper, had been nourishing a limb of Satan himself.

✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠  
These were but a few of the many pranks of this curious fiend who haunted Antwerp in the mediæval ages. When anger seized him for its own the dark streets were dangerous to linger in. Children formed his most succulent meal. He would nightly hide in the gloom of the narrow highways waiting for his prey. Grave fathers of the city who might leave their firesides for an hour's recreation over the





OLD STREET

ANTWERP





bottle failed to return, and were seldom seen again by mortal eye. The Long Wapper had seized them in his bony clutches. Nothing remained but to pray for the peace of their souls. ❀ ❀ ❀ There were other evil spirits who infested Antwerp of long ago. Every city in Flanders can boast its giant, and, when the Scheldt flowed across a swamp, Antwerp was oppressed by Druon Antigonus. We may doubt the existence of the Long Wapper, but we cannot question the reality of the overgrown Antigonus. Salvius Brabo, king of Tongres, slew him, and Brabo's image surmounts the well-head of Quentin Matsys, near by the cathedral. The bones of Antigonus have been preserved through the centuries in the Hôtel de Ville. Dürer saw them when he visited Antwerp. "I have seen the bones of the great giant at Antwerp," he wrote in his travel-diary. "His leg above his knee is five feet and a half long, and beyond measure heavy and very thick. So were his shoulder blades—a single one is broader than a strong man's back—and his other limbs. The man was eighteen feet high, ruled Antwerp, and did many wondrous deeds, as is set out in an old book which belongs to the magistrates of the town." Modern paleontologists scoffingly describe these pieces of yellow ivory as the ribs of a whale. But to every son of Antwerp they will remain the bones of Antigonus to the end of time. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀





ANTWERP, march of the Holy Roman Empire, remained a town of little note for centuries after giant Antigonus had been slain. Its early margraves were less ambitious than the governors of the neighbouring cities. Godfrey the Hunchback has left no more than a name in history. His nephew and successor, Godfrey de Bouillon, forgot Antwerp when he journeyed east to become king of Jerusalem. Then came the rule of the Dukes of Brabant. Because they were non-resident the growing community escaped the feuds and jealousies which ultimately wrecked the happiness of the fiefs belonging to the Counts of Flanders. The Counts would have filched Antwerp from Brabant had they dared. But their jurisdiction extended only so far as a horse could be ridden into the waters washing the left bank of the Scheldt, and the point of an outstretched sword was at that instant the limit of their sway. This authority confined the city to the right bank of the river, and, almost to the present day, the "Tête de Flandres," or left bank, is in some degree foreign soil to the inhabitants. ✠ ✠ Untrammelled by ducal interference, Antwerp commenced to prosper. Bruges, Ghent, and Malines endeavoured to hinder its growth and check its trade. Fairs were instituted, and, as money was not so plentiful as in the richer south, a curious scale of exchange was established. A goose was bartered for two hens, and two geese were worth a sucking pig. Three lambs would be given for a sheep, and three calves for an ox. A horse fair attracted visitors from Zealand and Germany. Whilst Antwerp's progress was mainly concerned with agriculture Bruges and Ghent could afford to sleep untroubled, for their supremacy was not likely to be seriously challenged. ✠ Then, at Bruges and Damme, the shifting sand in the Zwyn slowly closed the entrance to the port. And, by an extraordinary chance, Nature, so cruel to Bruges, was kind to Antwerp. The west mouth of the Scheldt gradually widened and deepened. The largest vessels found that they could take a direct course between the city and the sea without risk of stranding. The English were quick to realize the value of Antwerp as a mart for the disposal of their wool, hides, grain, and iron, and the "Magnus Intercursus" of 1458 was the



first charter to encourage the settlement of foreign traders. Other nations speedily followed. The agents of the Hanseatic towns were the last to transfer their warehouses from Bruges. That action completed the ruin of the older city. The rise of Antwerp as the greatest seaport in Europe dates from the day when the young Emperor Charles V made his "Joyous Entry" into the Grande Place. He tried to give his Flemish subjects equal rights with Spain in the trade with the Indies. Commerce came down the rivers which drained Central and Southern Germany, from the Baltic through the Sound, from the colonies of Spain and Portugal in America, Africa, and Asia. In a few years Antwerp was well described by the Florentine Guicciardini as "truly a leading city, in commerce heading all the cities of the world." ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

The spirit of Antwerp was essentially liberal in its attitude towards the stranger. The restrictions which had been enforced by the greedy usurers of Ghent and Bruges had no place in the statutes which regulated the port on the Scheldt. The discovery of the New World by Columbus and the opening of fresh trade routes by Vasco da Gama automatically shifted the centre of the world's trade from Venice and the ports on the Mediterranean to the north. "In the year 1503 the Portugales began to bring spices out of their Indies and from Calicut." Venice completely lost the trade in sugar. A Venetian envoy, writing rather sorrowfully in 1550, said that he was astonished at the large amount of business done in money and mercantile transactions, more especially as these surpassed in total and value what he had known in Venice. The Scheldt often harboured between two and three thousand vessels. Sometimes five hundred entered or left in a single day. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

The great bankers of the Old World had already established themselves round the Bourg; Fugger, Weiser, and Osteter, from Augsburg and Ulm; Benvisi of Lucca; Gualterotti from Florence; Spinola from Genoa. Anthony Fugger financed the exchequers of Maximilian and Charles-Quint. His wealth was fabulous. At his death there were six million golden crowns resting in his chests according to popular repute. Later in the century Sir Thomas Gresham walked the Antwerp Bourse as representative of the London merchants. Business was the whole-hearted delight of these proud men of com-

merce. They became masters of the wealth of the globe. They drove bargains with the sensitive pleasure of artists and the unyielding arrogance of princes. The Hanseatic colony marched to the Exchange twice daily with a band of musicians at its head. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ The life of the city was inspired by the quickening spirit of the Renaissance. The rise of Antwerp, abnormally rapid, was hastened by the energy of its citizens. Their political foresight and breadth of civic vision were almost unparalleled. As money flowed into their coffers they fashioned their home into the most beautiful of cities. Many of the principal buildings were erected within half-a-century. The cathedral was completed in 1500, and the last stone was set on the spire eighteen years later. Actually the church of Our Lady has never been completed for the twin spire is lacking, and had the choir been continued upon Kelderman's plans the church would have been the largest in Europe. The Grande Boucherie was built in 1500, the Exchange in 1531, the new Hôtel de Ville in 1561. Charles V rebuilt the Steen, or prison, in 1520. The church of St. Jacques was commenced in 1491. Operations were suspended from 1530 to 1602, then resumed, and finally stayed in 1694. The bald dates indicate periods of restless activity. Private citizens raised palaces for their dwelling houses. As the city became richer its administrators regulated the aspect of the more public thoroughfares. Thatch, which had been generally used for roofing material during the fifteenth century, was forbidden in the sixteenth. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ The streets became backgrounds for the most gorgeous processions. When Dürer visited Antwerp in 1520 the colour and interest of the daily life of Antwerp delighted his artistic soul, and his diary contains vivid pictures of popular demonstrations. "On the Sunday after the Feast of the Assumption I saw the great procession from the Church of Our Lady, where all the town of every craft and profession was assembled, each man dressed in his best according to his rank. Every trade and guild had its sign, by which it might be known. Between the companies were carried great costly gold pole-candles, and long old Frankish trumpets of silver. After the German manner there were many pipers and drummers blowing and beating their instruments most noisily." ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ "I saw the procession pass along the street, the people marching in















ACROSS THE SCHELDT

ANTWERP





rows, each row close to the other. There were Goldsmiths, Painters, Stonemasons, Embroiderers, Sculptors, Joiners, Carpenters, Sailors, Fishermen, Butchers, Leatherworkers, Clothmakers, Bakers, Tailors, Cordwainers, every kind of craftsmen and those who work with their hands. There were likewise the shopkeepers and merchants and their assistants of all sorts. After these came marksmen, with guns, bows, and crossbows, followed by horsemen and foot-soldiers. Then a large company of the Town Guard. Then a troop of fine men, richly and splendidly clothed in red. Before them, however, walked all the religious Orders, and members of some Foundations, very devoutly in their different robes."       

"In this procession were many widows, together in one company. They work for their own living and observe a special rule. They dress from head to foot in white linen robes, made expressly for the occasion and very sorrowful to behold. Among them were very stately persons. Lastly came the Canons and Chapter of Our Lady's Church, with their clergy, scholars, and relics. Twenty men carried the image of the Virgin Mary and the Lord Jesus, adorned in the richest manner, to the honour of the Lord God."   

Dürer gives picturesque details of the pageant. "The procession included many delightful sights, most wonderfully got up. Waggon were drawn along and on the stages were masks, and ships, and other constructions. Behind them came the Prophets in their order, and scenes from the New Testament, such as the Annunciation, the Three Magi riding camels and other strange beasts, very cleverly arranged ; also how Our Lady fled into Egypt—tending towards devoutness—and many other things which for shortness I must leave out. Lastly came a great Dragon which St. Margaret and her maidens led by a girdle ; she was wondrously beautiful. Behind her came St. George and his squire, a handsome knight in armour. There also rode many boys and girls beautifully dressed in the costumes of foreign lands, representing various saints. This procession, from beginning to end, took two hours to pass our house. There were so many things that I could never write them all in a book. So I must let well alone."

Antwerp not unnaturally became the headquarters of geographical discovery. Mercator left Louvain for Antwerp under the ban of heresy, and even in Antwerp he barely escaped the fate of his com-

panions. When Sir Thomas More wrote "Utopia" (and we may date his book by remembering that Henry VIII had but recently ascended the English throne) this maritime city aptly figured as the scene of a traveller's story. More was staying in Antwerp, where he had made the acquaintance of Peter Giles, a citizen "of honest reputation." But we must let More tell his own pleasing fiction of the genesis of his pamphlet. "Upon a certain day when I had heard the divine service in Our Lady's Church, which is the fairest, the most gorgeous, and curious church of building in all the city, and also most frequented of people, and the service being done was ready to go home to my lodging, I chanced to espy this foresaid Peter talking with a certain stranger, a man well stricken in age, with a black sunburned face, a long beard, and a cloak cast homely about his shoulders, whom, by his favour and apparel, forthwith I judged to be a mariner." There were many such seamen strolling along the quays, and up and down the narrow streets of the Bourg, the Grebbestraatje, the Loosen Gaeyweg, the alleys round the Vleeschhuis. But there was not such another as this Raphael Hythloday. He had sailed into the unknown with Amerigo Vespucci, and had been lost in the wilderness of New Castile—or at least so More tells us. His fables of a strange race are set down at length by the young Englishman. The three men continued their conversation in the garden at the back of More's lodging. And there, to the music of Our Lady's carillon, seated on a bench covered with green turf, Hythloday told the quaint fable of the manners, customs, laws, and ordinances of the Utopians. ♣ ♣ Utopia was the ideal commonwealth. More's dream of perfection has not yet come to pass. As we study his chapters upon government we cannot fail to note how Antwerp was wrecked by a disregard of the laws which controlled Utopia. "The people build cities, princes pull them down; the industry of the citizens creates wealth for rapacious lords to plunder; plebeian magistrates pass good laws for kings to violate; the people love peace, and their rulers stir up war." In writing these words Erasmus must have had the condition of Flanders in his mind. Philip II endeavoured to avert the bankruptcy of Spain by laying hands upon the accumulated treasure of the Low Countries. Far worse were the theological difficulties. In Utopia it was lawful for every man to favour and follow what religion he



would, "and that he might do the best he could to bring other to his opinion, so that he did it peaceably, gently, quietly, and soberly ; without hasty and contentious rebuking and inveighing against other." In Flanders there was no such freedom ; and with no freedom, no peace. Antwerp, essentially a Catholic community, yet had been the birthplace of more than one heresy. St. Norbert had successfully grappled with the trouble which had threatened his ecclesiastical quietude. The obstinate determination of Charles V to root out all heterodoxy became an obsession with his successor. The Spanish policy was a blunder as well as a crime, for thought itself was shackled in chains. Not only had new worlds been discovered by Columbus and his companions. The humanists were opening up vast unexplored continents of knowledge and speculation. ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿

In 1521 the books of Martin Luther were burnt by the executioner in the Grande Place of Antwerp, and soon the men who read those books were carried from the dungeons of the Steen to the same flames. For nearly a century the religious faith of the inhabitants of Antwerp was a bone of contention over which Catholics and Calvinists wrangled and fought. The very wealth and importance of the great city attracted the sedulous attention of inquisitors, evangelists, thieves, malcontents, and madmen. Much of the trouble can be ascribed to anxiety over the condition of the Church, rather than contempt of its doctrines. The bold criticism and satire of Erasmus was but a single indication of the working of the yeast. Only a community of unlimited resource, and exceptional powers of recuperation, could have withstood the trials of war, pestilence, and famine through which Antwerp passed during the reign of Philip II. ✿ ✿ ✿

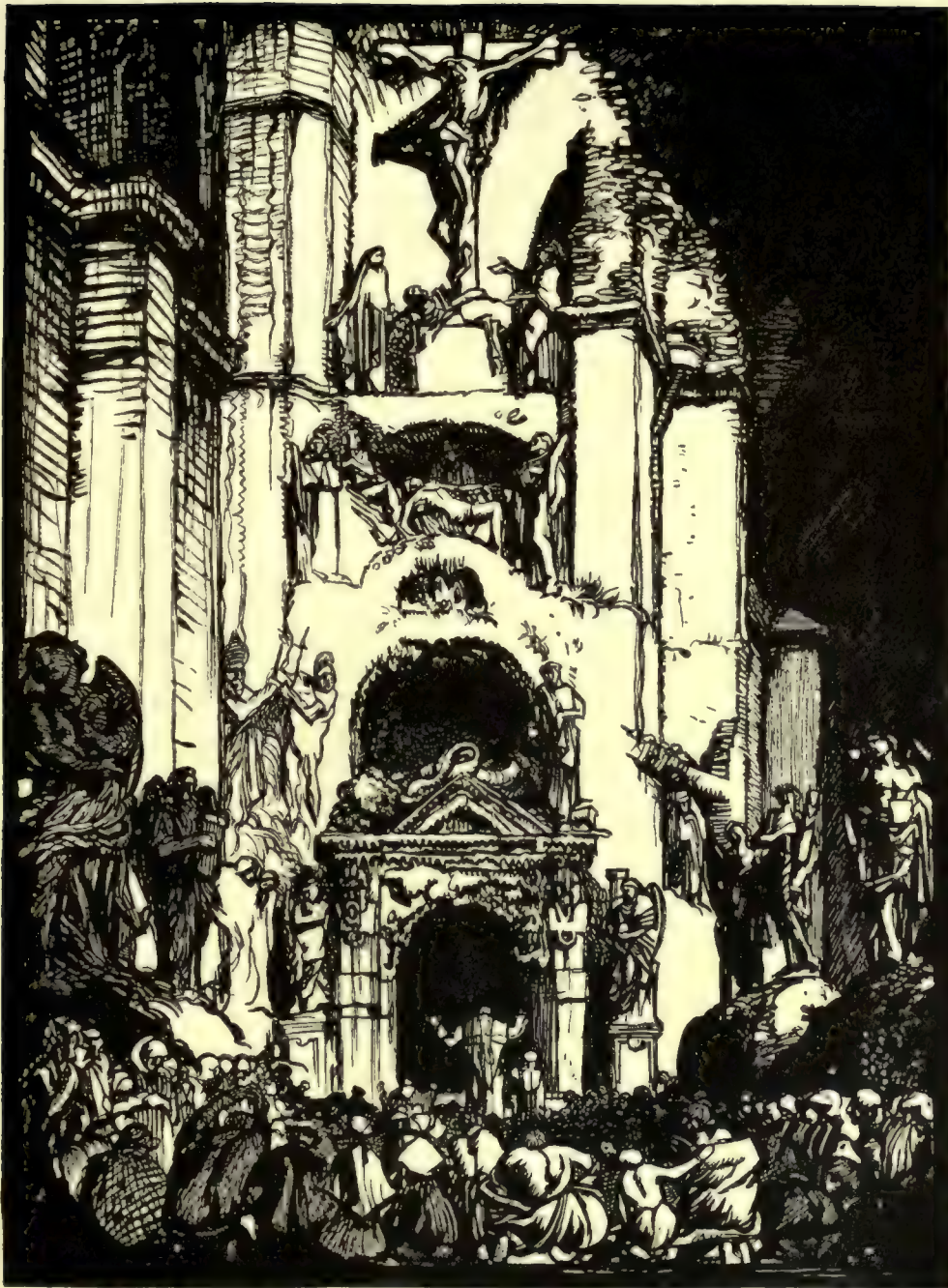
The recital of the deeds which sullied Spanish administration in those terrible years is outside our scope. It must be sought for in the pages of Motley or Petrus Blok. In 1566 the Italian traveller Guicciardini noted the happiness and prosperity of Antwerp. " Les hommes et les femmes de tout age se habillent fort bien selon leur faculté et estat : et tousjours à nouvelles et belles façons, mais plusieurs beaucoup plus richement et plus pompeusement que la civilité et honnesteté ne requiert. L'on y voit à toute heure nopces, convives, danses, l'on y oit de tous costez le son de tous instrumens, chants et bruits joyeux : bref, par tous endroits et par toutes voyes apparoist la richesse, la

puissance, la pompe, et la splendeur de la ville." This description was written within a few months of the iconoclastic madness which destroyed Antwerp's most precious treasures of art. On August 19th, during Orange's absence in Brussels, the "Image Breakers" invaded the churches, and the civic authorities lacked courage to withstand their outrages. Within four hours the interior of the church of Our Lady was reduced to a ruin. Gresham, the English agent, wrote: "Coming into Oure Lady Church, yt looked like hell where were above 1,000 torches brannyng and syche a noise! as yf heven and erth had gone together, with fallyng of images and fallyng down of costly works." Fanatics breed fanatics. The harsh policy of Philip II, the severities of inquisitors such as Ruard Tapper, the public burnings, provoked reprisals. Ypres, Courtray, and many towns in West Flanders were the scenes of similar excesses. Churches were looted and burnt. But Antwerp suffered most severely and was punished without mercy. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

The history of the rule of Alva belongs to the chronicles of Belgium and the Low Countries. Antwerp became the sport of intrigue. The Blood Council laid its hand upon Egmont and Horn, and the Grande Place of Brussels was the site of execrable judicial murders. Van Straalen, the burgomaster of Antwerp, was brought to the block. The young Count de Buren, son of the Prince of Orange, abducted from his studies at Louvain, was shipped off to Spain. Flanders and Brabant groaned under the armies of Alva and William the Silent. "Happy are those who died without having witnessed the ills which are before the door and which we may expect at any moment," exclaimed Cardinal Granvelle. Antwerp's crowning disaster came in 1576 when the unpaid foreign troops seized and looted the city for three days without interruption. No quarter was given to Catholic or Calvinist. The number of the slain reached some seven thousand souls. The value of the booty was incalculable. Whole streets were burnt to the ground, and the commercial prosperity of Antwerp ruined for generations. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

The prison of the Steen stands a memorial of this dark age. The noisome streets of the Bourg have gone. We can no longer trace the Rue du Pont aux Anguilles which led to the old Fish Market, or wander over the Pont de la Prison to linger before the Calvary





THE CALVARY OF ST. PAUL

ANTWERP


















outside the Steenpoort. But the dungeons which held so many of the inhabitants of Antwerp can still be seen, and the faint wash of the tidal river echoes in the torture chamber. And, by the side of the gate is the stone with the sculptured hand, "de Blauwe Hemel," where culprits acknowledged their guilt whilst priests recited the prayers for the dying in front of the Crucifix on the Pont de la Prison. At this gate women came to learn news of the captives. "He has gone on a pilgrimage to the Isle of Cyprus," would be the reply. Then hope was dead. Prisoners who started on that journey never returned. Their bodies were already floating down the Scheldt to the sea. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

The wonder remains that after the long years of the struggle with Spain, Antwerp was able to retain its position as a great city. Many of its inhabitants sought safety in England and the Netherlands. But the vitality of the Flemings is inexhaustible. Their pride had not been broken although their credit had gone. Contemporary travellers give pathetic accounts of the deserted town. Sir Dudley Carleton visited the port in 1616. "We came to Antwerp, which I must confess exceeds any I ever saw anywhere else, for the bewtie and uniformitie of buildings, heith and largenes of streetes, and strength and fairenes of the rampars. But I must tell you the state of this towne in a worde, so as you take it literally, magna civitas magna solitudo, for in ye whole time we spent there I could never sett my eyes in the whole length of a streete uppon forty persons at once ; I never met coach nor saw man on horseback ; none of our companie (though both were workie days) saw one pennie worth of ware ether in shops or in streetes bought or solde. Two walking pedlers and one ballad seller will carrie as much on theyr backs at once as was in that royall exchange ether above or below. In many places grasse growes in the streetes, yet (that which is rare in such solitarines) the buildings are all kept in perfect reparation. Theyr condition is much worse (which may seeme strange) since the truce than it was before." Eight years later Golnitzius described the same Exchange. "There remains only an immense solitude ; the stalls are covered with dust and the pictures with cobwebs. Not a merchant nor a courtier more is to be met with. All has disappeared. All has foundered in the deeps of civil war." ❀

Not all. The arts never wholly foundered. From the days when

Quentin Matsys entertained Holbein and Dürer the guild of St. Luke and its members steadily worked and prospered through all the calamities which beset the city. Matsys, Patinir, and De Bles continued the tradition of the Van Eycks. Their inspiration was largely religious, and their patrons were sought among the ecclesiastics. As they passed away the first period of Flemish painting came to a close. The Renaissance turned the thoughts of every artist to the sun-warmth of the south. Our Netherlanders, wrote Carel van Mander, remained, so to speak, in the darkness until Jan van Schoorel brought to them something of Italy. ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿  
 Schoorel had worked in Venice, and returned "the guide and torch of the arts in the Low Countries." Frans Floris, a pupil of Lombard of Liège, and an ardent disciple of Schoorel, was admitted a master of the Guild of St. Luke in Antwerp in 1540, and made such large sums that in 1563 he was able to build a beautiful house in the Italian style. Antwerp now could boast the most celebrated craftsmen in Europe, printers such as Christopher Plantin, architects of the ability of Cornelis de Vriendt, engravers like Van den Passe and Wiericx. The artist-painters included Frans Pourbus, Martin de Vos, the elder Francken, the two Brils, and Jan and Pieter Breughel. Then, almost at the signing of the truce which gave rest to the devastated land, Peter Paul Rubens journeyed home from Italy to his mother's house in the Kloosterstraat. ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿  
 "Prince of painters, and painter of princes," Rubens marks the zenith of the art of Antwerp. His personal glory reflects very faithfully the wealth and power of the great city. The kings of Europe sat in his studio and welcomed him to their palaces. He was the first modern artist of truly cosmopolitan fame, for Brussels, London, Paris, Mantua, and Madrid found him equally at home. In the school which acknowledged him as its head the ascetic restraint of the early Flemish painters was replaced by an almost overwhelming delight in the joy of the senses, and a technical perfection and superb fluency of expression recalling the master-work of Venice. ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿  
 Rubens, Van Dyck, and Jordaens are characteristic of this brilliant period in the history of Antwerp. Their canvases are not remarkable for deep thought or sincere feeling, nor is there any direct effort to achieve poesy or even passion. They saw the world scenically, and











lived in a golden haze of beauty, wealth, and pleasure. Rubens was aristocratic by education ; Van Dyck, a more effeminate yet finer spirit, by instinct. Jordaens had been cast in a coarser mould.  The primitive Flemings represented their sitters as solemn people passing through a troubled existence to the happiness of a promised communion with the saints. There is no light-heartedness in the portraits of Memlinc or Van der Goes. Between Van Eyck's picture of Arnolfini's wife, painted in Bruges in 1434, and Rubens's "Chapeau de Paille," finished in Antwerp about 1620, there is more than a simple difference in time of a century and a half. The Antwerp School shows us women who flaunt their opulent charms unveiled before mankind, and openly seek admiration and homage. The men are flushed and choleric, whilst the gravest are not uninfluenced by the fleeting delights and allurements of the moment. The thoughts of Cornelius van der Geest are centred upon his art treasures. Who would dare attempt to divine the follies and vanities which course through the mind of Béatrice de Cusance ?     Antwerp during these later days had become paganized. The sacred vessels were restored to its altars ; heresy had been eradicated ; the ordinances of the faith were observed with scrupulous exactitude. But the artistic and intellectual inspiration of the city was based on the mythologies of the past.        As Rubens painted, his servant read aloud from the books of Tacitus. Above his gates stood statues of Mercury and Minerva, and under were inscribed quotations from the tenth satire of Juvenal. Dryden turned the first into English verse freely but not inaccurately : 

Entrust thy fortune to the Powers above.  
Leave them to manage for thee, and to grant  
What their unerring wisdom sees thee want.

The second motto is celebrated:      

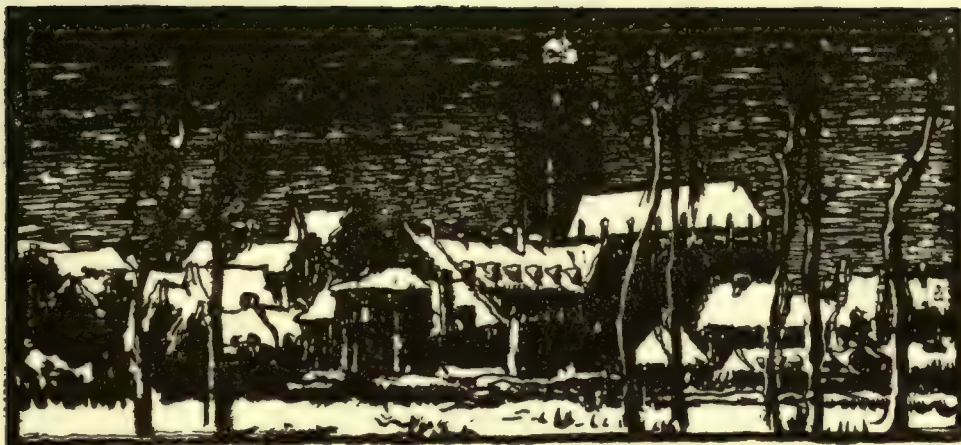
Orandum est, ut sit mens sana in corpore sano.  
Fortem posce animum, et mortis terrore carentem . . .  
Nesciat viasci, cupiat nihil.

(" Let our prayer be for a healthy mind in a healthy body.  
Pray for a bold heart, untroubled by the fear of death,  
Innocent of wealth and the lust for riches.")

Both are good rules of conduct, but there is nothing essentially Christian in their teaching.        

Not many streets away was the mansion in which Jordaens had invested his savings. Here was an artist ready to turn from an unabashed vision of Silenus and his attendant nymphs to a Nativity or Adoration, from an "Education of Bacchus" to a "Miracle of St. Martin." His favourite subject, "The King drinks," reveals another aspect of the life of Antwerp which was not confined to the day of the Epiphany. ✠ Antwerp in the seventeenth century was the scene of continuous festivity. Even in the convents "there was great jollity and the wine flowed liberally." In 1671 Balthasar Moretus, the printer, gave a dinner which continued for three days. On the first, sixty guests sat down to table, and there were forty-two dishes. On the second day the cooks sent up forty-eight dishes. On the third day, the guests had dwindled not unaccountably to forty. With unimpaired appetite they attacked thirty-five varieties of food. The Guild of St. Luke once gave a dinner which cost 1481 guilders, or £360. No opportunity was lost for a ceremonial meal. ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ When Rubens was buried monks from six convents accompanied the body in procession to the church of St. Jacques amidst exceeding pomp. Masses were said at the different churches by the Brothers of Our Lady, the Dominicans, the Augustines, the Capuchins, the Carmelites, the Franciscans, the Beghards, and the Minimi. After the interment a banquet was given at the painter's house, and another for the magistrates and officials of the city at the Town Hall. The Confraternity of Romanists held a third at the "Golden Fleece," whilst thirty-four members of the Guild of St. Luke dined quietly at the "Stag." ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ Jordaens has painted these Flemish feasts, which were not always so pious; tables overflowing with meat, fish, game, fruit, preserves; platters and flagons of chased and burnished metal; the choicest wines of France and the Rhineland shining through the most exquisite glass Venice and Murano could supply; white napery from Cambray and the looms of the south; walls covered with Spanish leather and tapestry from Brabant. ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ Neither the needs of the body nor the cares of the soul were neglected in Old Antwerp. ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠





RÂNTOME tells us that Charles V had often contemplated the idea of converting the Netherlands and adjacent provinces into "a kingdom of Belgic Gaul" extending from Cologne to Ypres, and from Strasburg to Antwerp. Philip II was unable to carry out his father's grandiose scheme. But, towards the end of his life, he gave the Low Countries a nominal independence under the joint rule of his daughter the Infanta Isabella and her cousin and husband the Archduke Albert of Austria. Belgium had already been governed by two women of considerable character. Margaret of Austria gained the goodwill of her subjects whilst educating the young Charles V. His natural daughter Margaret of Parma, born in Audenaerde of a Flemish mother, was Regent of the Netherlands during a most difficult period. Isabella of Spain possessed the talent of the first and the discretion of the second. She had courage, a singularly clear intellect, a love of sport and the open air, and, more valuable still, a keen sense of humour. She was also a beautiful woman, as we can tell from the portraits of Rubens and Coello. Cardinal Bentivoglio, writing in later years when she was forty-six, describes the grace of her movements, the splendour of her eyes, the kindliness and majesty of her bearing. Under her gracious sway Brussels became one of the pleasantest of European capitals—a reputation it has never lost. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

The Archduke was typically Spanish, stiff, formal, impassive, rarely speaking, seldom smiling. He was also a true son of the Royal House of Austria, short and puny in stature, with the fair hair and skin of a German, and the protruding jaw of a Habsburg. His career had been mapped out as one of religion. At the age of eighteen he was already Cardinal of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem, Archbishop of Toledo, and Inquisitor-General. Then state necessity decided that the young priest must marry his cousin, and Rome released him from his vows. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

The Archduchess and her consort arrived in their new kingdom towards the close of 1599. The Infanta wrote a journal of naïve value, giving a day-by-day record of her journey across Europe, from Madrid to Villefranche, and then through Savoy and Lorraine to the frontier. At Thionville the peasants scattered flowers before their path, and they were welcomed by a vast assembly of nobles and clergy. Then they took "the very dangerous road" from Luxembourg to Namur. Here the princess was impressed by the thick forests of the Ardennes. Her tiny suite was well guarded, for hostile French armies were in the neighbourhood. "We were afraid," wrote the duchess frankly. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Arlon, Bastogne, Marche, Cirey, and Namur were on the line of route. The Infanta was enchanted by the romantic situation of Namur upon the Meuse. And at Namur she witnessed "the prettiest festival." Over sixty men, perched upon stilts, danced quadrilles in the public square. "You could not see them without shrieking with laughter. They not only fell over each other but upon the crowds watching them. It was better than a bullfight." ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

At Nivelles they stayed in the Abbey of St. Gertrude, and at Hal another great crowd of nobility and clergy were waiting to receive them. Then, after sleeping at the cloister of La Cambre, the two sovereigns made their state entry into Brussels on Sunday, September 5, 1599. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

An ancient prophecy declared that peace would not bless the Low Countries until two lords should ride through the capital of Brabant upon white steeds. Many predictions can be carried out to the letter if we are only warned in time. When the Archdukes left their litter at the city gate they mounted the whitest saddle horses Brussels could





GRAND' PLACE (Maison des Brasseurs and Maison des Bouchers)

BRUSSELS





boast. The trappings were of Spanish magnificence. The harness of the Infanta's horse was encrusted with jewels. ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ The magistrates tendered the staff of justice and the civic keys. Then followed one of those interminable processions which are still the pride and the delight of the Belgian soul. Through the streets marched company after company of armed citizens and archers with trumpets and drums. Then came pages, cavaliers, chamberlains, Grandees of Spain, ambassadors, heralds, with the ladies of the court in huge chariots. At the cathedral of Ste. Gudule a *Te Deum* was chanted. "I have never seen anything more beautiful and better arranged than the Grand' Place," wrote the Infanta. "On a great balcony were all the ladies who formed a charming spectacle—for many were very beautiful, and all were very well dressed . . . I have never seen so many people in the streets, and also at all the windows, even to the attics. I was astonished that in spite of the rain the crowds did not diminish." These were almost the last words in the journal. The Archduchess noted that she had travelled from Madrid to Brussels without a single disaster. Not a man, not a horse, not even a mule had died on the way. *Laus Deo.* ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ The Archdukes systematically made acquaintance with every corner of their realm. At Louvain they attended the University and listened to a long Latin discourse from Justus Lipsius. The professor of history was expounding Seneca's "De Clementia" and made bold use of his opportunity to insist that the first duty of a prince was to rule his people with clemency and wisdom. The royal progress continued at short intervals through Flanders, Artois, Hainaut, the outlying district of Cambray, and the seignories of Lille, Douai, and Orchies, whilst the towns visited were Malines, Antwerp, Termonde, Ghent, Courtray, Lille, Tournay, Douai, Arras, Cambray, Valenciennes, Mons, Buiche, and Nivelles. The most extravagant festivities marked their entry into Antwerp, where the banker Fugger was responsible for the entertainment. For more than a week the city devoted itself to pleasure. Day after day the rejoicing continued. Nearly the whole of the sixth day was spent in the printing-house of Christopher Plantin, where Jean Moretus struck off an elaborate broadsheet in honour of his guests. ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ These were the brightest hours of a long reign. The unceasing war

soon recommenced. The Archduke Albert was defeated by Prince Maurice of Nassau at Nieuport, where for the first time the forces of the United Provinces successfully stood against the veterans of Spain in open conflict. Then ensued the long-drawn agony of the siege of Ostend, the last possession of the Provinces in Flanders. Three years the investment continued. The Infanta spent much of that time in and near the Spanish camp. According to tradition she vowed that her linen should not be changed until Ostend fell into Spanish hands. At the end of the siege "couleur Isabelle" became a prevailing tint. For Spinola triumphed at the cost of 100,000 men. The besieged lost 60,000. When Ostend capitulated on September 22, 1604, the Spanish general feasted the conquered troops, accorded them all the honours of war, and conveyed them at his own expense to Sluys. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

Philip II treated the Low Countries as a people in rebellion, and at the end of the sixteenth century the land was in the completest misery and stagnation. Now opened a period of peace and regeneration. Brussels became the centre of an animated court. The old palace, in a quarter of the city known as the Mont Coudenberg, had been originally erected by the early counts of Brussels when they relinquished their château in the Isle of St. Géry. The Dukes of Brabant, after transferring their court from Louvain to Brussels at the commencement of the fourteenth century, added to the buildings. The Burgundian princes made many embellishments, and the whole was rebuilt by Charles V, who selected the great hall as the scene of his historic abdication of the cares of empire in 1555. Then followed years of neglect and decay. One of the first duties of the Archdukes was a careful restoration and rebuilding. ♣ ♣ ♣

From the topographical prints of *Bruxella Septenaria*, and similar publications, we can gain an accurate vision of this most romantic palace. On the right of an open square stood a building of three floors raised upon an open arcade. Dormer windows broke the steep tiled roof. At the end of the square, communicating with the right and left wings of the palace, was a lofty Gothic church. The left wing contained a square clock tower surmounted by a vaned cupola. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

The formal gardens were famed for their beauty. Wrote the French-



man Puget de la Serre : " De ce palais, on descend dans un jardin le plus délicieux que l'art et la nature aient jamais cultivé ensemble." Indeed, he declared, had there been an apple tree he would assuredly have taken it for an earthly Paradise. Amidst these gardens were tennis courts, a labyrinth, a jousting ground, and a small lake. The park was thickly wooded and full of game. Under restrictions the grounds were free to the public, for, said a contemporary, " ce lieu est ouvert durant toute l'année aux honnestes, et deux fois l'an au peuple."

The subtle difference is amusing. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Beyond the palace stood the fantastic palaces of the older nobility, the Hôtels of the Comte de Fuentes and the Duc d'Arschot, the Hôtel de Nassau, and the spires, roofs, and tourelles of Brussels itself. The draughtsman has crowded the courtyard with ponderous coaches with their long-bodied horses. The garden alleys are crowded by dames and cavaliers. Two knights in armour are charging each other with lances lowered across the jousting ground. Swans sail upon the lake. Deer hide in the thickets of the park. The scene is that of an enchanted fairyland, background for a " conte des fées " by Madame d'Aulnoy. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

The interior of the palace on the Coudenbourg was more sumptuous than any king's house in northern Europe, for the Archdukes had not only considerable personal taste but the wealth of Spain and the craft of Flanders at their command. The long corridors were enriched by the finest tapestries Brabant could weave. Many were designed by Bernard van Orley. A set of the Passion were copied from the cartoons of Rubens. The stained glass came from the workshops of Claes Rombaut. The cabinets and furniture were mostly Italian. On them stood cups shaped out of rock crystal and set in virgin gold, clocks studded with gems, vases of lapis lazuli, statuary from the woodcarvers of Valladolid, the most precious medals of the southern renaissance, pictures by the great masters of the Low Countries. ❀

The domestic life of the sovereigns was simple. But etiquette and state followed the stern rule of the Escorial. Two hundred Burgundian halberdiers were always on duty. Mass was said every morning in the chapel whose flamboyant glories and unparalleled treasures were said by travellers to surpass the perfection of St. Denis or the Sainte Chapelle. The Infanta occupied a throne on a dais,

and every ambassador, every Grandee of Spain, every Knight of the Golden Fleece had his allotted seat.      ✚   ✚   ✚   ✚   ✚

As befitted a prince who had taken holy orders, the Archduke Albert was deeply religious. Whilst the Infanta was hunting in the wilds of Mariemont or Tervueren he remained in his oratory or consulted with his favourite Jesuits. The court was not always grave. The Archduchess loved dancing, and was pleased to watch her attendants perform the intricate evolutions of the pavane and the gaillarde. But piety chastened the court and even influenced the festive life of the city. "Nothing was more curious than the aspect of Brussels on the night of Holy Thursday," wrote a French visitor. "The streets and the public squares, as light as day in the flare of the torches, were crowded by penitents of the nobler classes. These gentlemen walked from church to church to kneel before the Stations and to weep over Christ's Tomb. Many of them, covered by a rough cloak, carried a heavy cross on their shoulders. Others, half clothed, flagellated their body or whipped themselves with chains. Mingling the profane with the sacred, they displayed their wounds to the ladies who flocked to admire their devout ardour."      ✚   ✚   ✚   ✚   ✚   ✚   ✚

On the same day took place the "Ommegang" or "Procession du Sablon." The "Grand Serment," or Great Company of the Crossbowmen, contributed to the expenses of the Church of the Sablon, and a patronal feast developed into the revelry of a popular carnival. An exact record of these mediæval pageants has been preserved in the canvases of Van Alsloot. We stand in the Grand' Place amidst the brown timbered houses which disappeared during Marshal Villeroy's bombardment. At every window sit the ladies of Brussels in black silk and voluminous white ruffs. From the lancet windows of the Hôtel de Ville and Broodhuys, or Maison du Roy, flutter banners and pennons. Strings of arquebusiers, with guns strutted to the shoulder, fire volleys over the heads of their friends. The squads bend and turn across the square, the great and lesser crossbowmen, the archers, the fifty-two guilds with their deans robed in scarlet. Youths on horseback, in beplumed armour and attended by richly dressed stewards, symbolize the Dukes of Brabant. Chariots contain set scenes of biblical and classical story. Dwarfs and giants caper and sway amidst forests of silken standards, St. George attacks the Dragon,





RUINS OF THE ABBEY

VILLERS





angels ride on camels, serpents spit fire, and the priests of the Sablon bear on its platform the miracle-working image of the Virgin. ❀ ❀  
The Archduke Albert died in 1621. His funeral at the Cathedral of Ste. Gudule lasted from six in the morning until eight at night. On the day following his death the Infanta renounced all pomp, and clothed herself in the grey habit of the nuns of the Order of St. Clare, a dress she retained until her death in 1633. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

A Frenchman quoted by the Comte de Ségur gives a bright picture of the capital during the rule of the Archdukes who succeeded the Infanta Isabella. Brussels is described as "one of the finest, largest, and best situated cities, not only of Brabant but of the whole of Europe. The old quarters which preserve so singularly picturesque an aspect with their sloping and tortuous streets, the fine mansions of grey stone carved in the Spanish style, and the grandeur of the Grand' Place were hidden during the seventeenth century behind an enceinte of walls pierced by eight lofty gates, flanked by one hundred and twenty-seven round towers or bastions at almost equal distance from each other like the balls on a crown. Within a mile of the city was the forest of Soignes with many stags, red and roe deer, that were hunted up to the ramparts of the town. During the promenade of the Court there circulated in a long file during the hours of fashion five or six hundred carriages attended by footmen in the most brilliant liveries. The music and singing in the many churches were renowned, for the Archduke Leopold, an enthusiastic amateur, maintained at his own cost forty or fifty of the finest musicians from Italy and Germany." ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

French visitors were numerous, and they brought with them a Gallic charm and gaiety which lightened the oppressive solemnity of the Spanish Court. Their presence was sometimes unwished for. The circle of Henri Quatre, so graphically portrayed in the veridical anecdotes of Tallement des Réaux, was not a pattern of virtue or decorum. When Condé fled with his young wife to Brussels in order that she might avoid the embarrassing attentions of the old king, the French ambassador, acting upon the instructions of his master, made elaborate and nearly successful plans to abduct the duchess from the sanctuary of the Infanta's palace. She was exceedingly beautiful. Cardinal Bentivoglio praised the marvellous whiteness of her skin

and the incomparable graces of her features. Henri IV ordered Malherbe to express his royal feelings in verse. The poet complied :

Ma dame est captive, et son crime  
C'est que je l'aime et qu'on estime  
Qu'elle en fait de même de moi.

The girl wavered. She was only seventeen. Then Philippe de Manicamp with twenty-five horsemen was sent across the frontier to carry off the not too-reluctant beauty during the night of the 13-14 February. The Archduke discovered the plot, shut her up in the Hôtel de Nassau, surrounding it with sentinels, huge fires, a guard of five hundred men, and pickets of cavalry. The Bruxellois imagined that a French invasion was at hand. Manicamp was too wise to risk his life and nothing happened. But the French king raged, and commenced to mobilise his army for an attack in force. Then, exactly two months later, he was struck dead at the corner of the Rue de la Ferronnerie. Ravallac's knife solved a domestic complication that brought France and Spain to the verge of war for no other reason than the fascination of Mademoiselle de Montmorency's sparkling eyes. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Marie de Medicis found a refuge in Brussels from her tormentor Cardinal de Richelieu. Gaston d'Orléans and his friend Puylaurens outstayed their welcome. Christina of Sweden did not forget Brussels during her mad tour across Europe. Every disinherited prince and throneless monarch lodged in the city, from Don Emmanuel of Portugal to Charles II of England. Wild cavaliers, like the Comte de Boutteville who had defied the decrees against duelling of Louis XIII, and sober theologians, such as the great Arnauld who had outraged the religious ideas of the "Grand Monarque," found equal safety on the banks of the Senne. Puget de La Serre's tribute to the men of Antwerp applies with much truth to the good-tempered burgers of Brussels. "De vous entretenir de la bonté et la douceur de son peuple, la longue expérience que j'en ay faite, au nombre de beaucoup d'autres, me donne l'envie d'en laisser au public un volume entier, plus tost que ces lines. Mais comme le temps et mon peu de loisir m'en ostent le moyen, il me suffit de publier et de soustenir que ce peuple est le plus charitable aux estrangers, le plus zélé en sa religion, et le plus obéissant à son prince qu'autre que j'aye jamais veu." ❀ ❀





NE road from Brussels leads through Walloon Brabant to Villers, but few travellers stop to study the wonderful but pathetic ruins of the great Cistercian abbey. "Like all places belonging to that order," wrote an English archæologist, "it is at a distance from towns, close to water, and well sheltered from cold winds. The charming situations of the English monasteries of Tintern and Valle Crucis are examples of

such choice by the founder of the house in Brabant, which is placed under the shelter of a hill that has been quarried to furnish materials ; on the south and west, however, the land stretches smooth in sward from the abbey doors and, even now, when the space in front of the church is strewn with wreckage, there is level green as far as the edge of the wood, that encroaches again on ground which, seven centuries ago, was cleared by order of St. Bernard himself." ❀ ❀

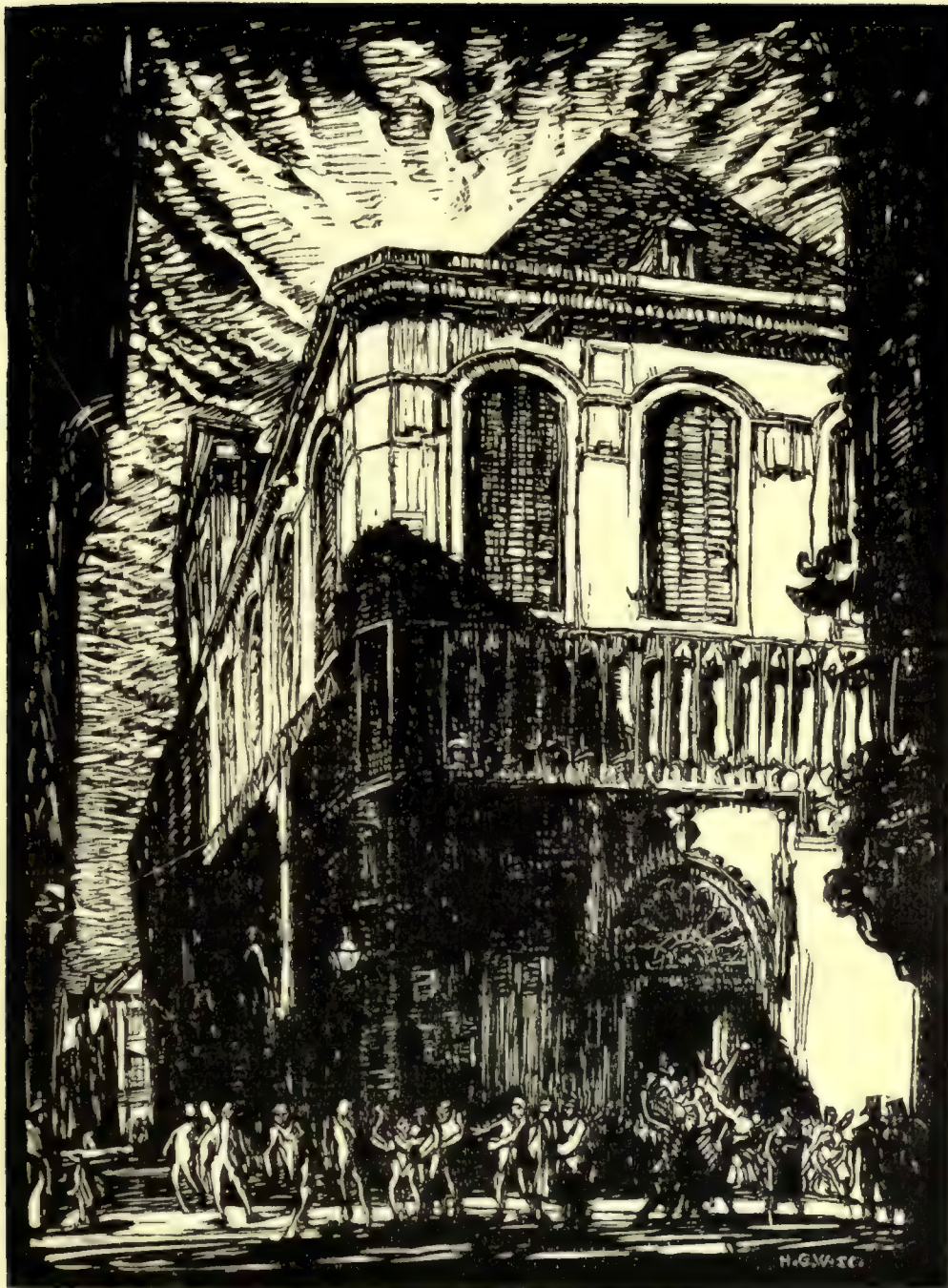
In the forest round Villers roved goblins, evil spirits, and werwolves. In the time of Abbot Gyrard, not many years after the building of the monastery, a young girl from the village, whilst watching cattle on the edge of the wood, was attacked by one of these fiendish creatures. An archer shot the animal, which ran howling into the thickets. A few days later the same soldier was asked to visit a man who had been shot in the side by some of the robbers who infested

the neighbourhood. The archer went, and found in the wound his own arrow. Then he knew the wounded man was a werwolf. He turned every one out of the room, for he was afraid the wretch might accuse him of highway brigandage. He taxed the dying man with endeavouring to carry off the girl in order that he might eat her. The werwolf confessed, turned on his bed, and died. ❀ ❀ ❀

The Abbey of Villers was founded in 1146 by St. Bernard of Clairvaux, after his return from the disastrous Second Crusade. At first the monks from Champagne settled at Gemioncourt, but their abbot found a better site on the banks of the river Thyle and Bernard himself helped to erect the first tiny oratory of stone. In the thirteenth century the abbey and its cloisters were rebuilt on the gigantic scale we can trace in the ruins of to-day. Here are the crumbling walls of the Guest House, the Library, the residences of the Abbot and the Prior, the Procurator, the huge Refectory with its butteries, sculleries, dormitories, workrooms, infirmary, and dispensary. These buildings date from about 1190 to 1784. The destruction of Villers is a recent tragedy. For nearly seven hundred years the monks lived according to the strict Benedictine rule. In winter as in summer they rose before three and prayed unceasingly until nine, with complines at two, and vespers at six. The abbey suffered during the religious wars of the sixteenth century, whilst the imperialist armies burnt its farms and slaughtered the peasantry of its villages. In 1776 there remained fifty-four monks and only eleven lay brethren. Then came the fury of the French Revolution from which Brabant did not escape. The abbey was closed, the monks scattered, and the buildings wrecked. Less than a hundred years have elapsed since the death of the last abbot of Villers. The oldest inhabitant of the village of La Ville can recall the face of the last of the brothers. The tombs of the Dukes of Brabant in the profaned sanctuary have been destroyed and their bones scattered in a search for treasure. The roof of the church is open to the sky, and the huge pillars of the nave rise amidst a tangled thicket of undergrowth and weed. ❀ ❀ ❀

The river Thyle, which crosses the great Court of Honour of the monastery, flows into the Dyle, and the Dyle passes through the university city of Louvain. As a community Louvain can boast a history as ancient as any town in Belgium, although its civic importance was










THE LIBRARY AND UNIVERSITY

LOUVAIN





slower in arriving than that of Brussels or Ghent, whilst Liège and Tournay take precedence in rank. But the old prosperity of Louvain as a cloth manufacturing centre was broken ages ago during the continual dissensions between the weavers and their counts. Cloth of Louvain has made way for "bière de Louvain"; and the former Cloth Hall has been transformed into the headquarters of the university. 

The oldest university in Europe is that of Paris, where the first schools were opened by the successors of Charlemagne. Oxford and Cambridge were founded in the twelfth century, whilst many of the Italian universities were at the height of their renown in the Middle Ages. Louvain came comparatively late into the field, for the consent of Jean IV, Duke of Brabant, and the Papal Bull of Martin IV were not obtained until 1425. With remarkable activity the new home for learning conquered its position in Europe and attracted students from France, Italy, England, and Germany. The letters of notification establishing the schools were issued by Duke Jean and placed on the doors of every church in the provinces of Brabant, Holland, Flanders, Hainaut, Namur, and Liège. He invited to the new hall not only the youth of his own state, but also those of all the adjoining provinces. He promised them his ducal protection and prompt justice. He prayed kings, bishops, and all exercising jurisdiction to place no obstacle in the publication of the letter of notification, and also asked them to assist in making the journey to Louvain easy and safe. Soon the scholars flocked to the city, bringing such prosperity that other cities became jealous, so that Bruges unavailingly petitioned its rulers that it might also have a university, and, failing that, the schools of Louvain should be removed to the town on the Zwyn. In the sixteenth century Louvain was second only to Paris, and the students numbered between seven and eight thousand.    

Of the five faculties, arts was at first the most celebrated, although theology ultimately took its place and Louvain became one of the first Catholic universities in the world. Adrian of Utrecht, who taught Charles V at Louvain, was entered on the books of the university in 1476, became a doctor of theology in 1491, a bishop and cardinal in 1515, and Pope in 1522. When he received his degree, in conscious achievement he tossed his doctor's cap in the air. "On the day I become Pope," he boastingly laughed, "I will build in this street

a college as high as I have thrown my hat." Louvain says that he did not forget his promise, and, during his brief reign at Rome, the Pontiff considerably advanced the fortunes of his Alma Mater. ✠ Charles V was a scholar as early as 1507, and later visited the city some five or six times. Upon the occasion of his residence in 1545 he insisted that the Rector should take precedence. Erasmus was a member of the university in 1504, whilst Thomas More was attending lectures in 1508 and 1514. The first edition of "Utopia" was published by Thierry Martens in the city in 1517. Louvain had a printing-press seven years before Oxford. Justus Lipsius, perhaps the most celebrated of the professors, taught law and jurisprudence until his death in 1606. Around him gathered such scholars as Scaliger and Isaac Casaubon. A crowd of learned men taught in the schools during the years of the Catholic renaissance. Cornelius Jansen, professor of theology in 1617, wrote his disturbing "Augustinus" in an old towered bastion which remained until quite recently on the edge of the Dyle. Mercator was dreaming over his globes until he was compelled to retire to Antwerp. Vesale, head of the medical school, robbed the gibbets for anatomy subjects, whilst Dordoens botanized in the woods of Heverlé. ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ The surroundings were of the sweetest. Erasmus said that the air of Louvain was preferable to that of Italy. Guicciardini, in his quaint French, wrote in 1567: "Ceste ville est assise en un très bon et très fertile territoire, ayant l'air si doux et si bon et si courtois que la vigne y croist en la ville et aux champs." Louis Coulon in his "Ulysse français" (1643) said that the Muses could find no more agreeable place of sojourn, and paid a second tribute to the softness of the air. The Rector of the University was the highest official in the city, having authority to overrule the civic councillors. He was known as the "Recteur Magnifique," was clothed in scarlet robes, wearing an academical hat of purple trimmed with ermine. He was always escorted by a beadle with a mace. On state occasions his dignity had to be supported by six beades. ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ Yet the fathers of the city did not resent this rival glory. In the Hôtel de Ville (1448-1459) they raised the most exquisite building that Flemish art can boast. The accounts of its architect and mason, Mathieu de Layens, reveal a zealous care that only the best work-





CATHEDRAL OF ST. PIERRE

LOUVAIN



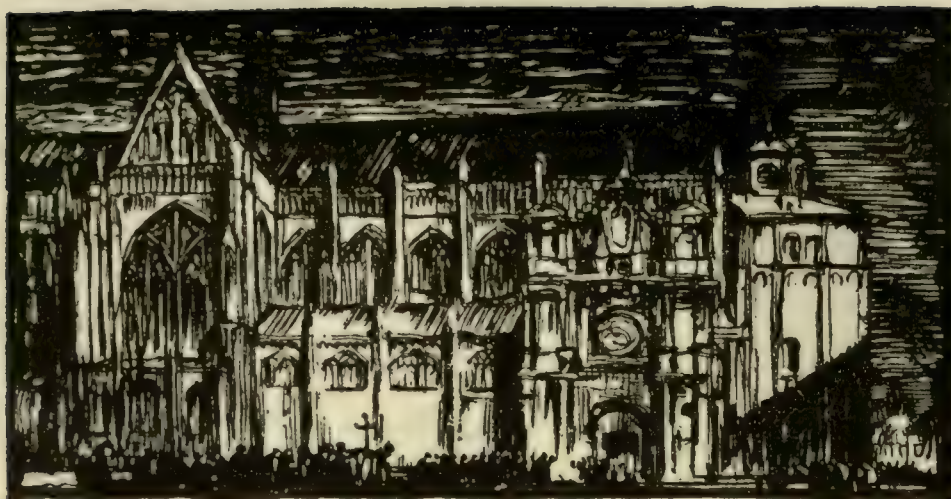


manship should find its place in this civic home. Louvain had innumerable artists and craftsmen, and most of them—Thierry Bouts, Quentin Matsys, Roger van der Weyden, Hugo van der Goes, and others of lesser note—were called upon to decorate the hall. This tiny gem of architecture with its tourelles, canopies, statues, brackets, tracery, dormers, spires, and vanes, has the fantastic appearance of a finely chiselled casket from the bench of a Brobdingnagian goldsmith. And opposite the Hôtel de Ville these masons of consummate genius built the beautiful Church of St. Pierre, enriched by a thousand treasures of the marvellous art of the Flemish craftsmen. ❀ ❀

Louvain is now as ruined a relic of the past as the wrecked Abbey of Villers. To know the city in its pride we must read Camille Lemonnier's poetic description of the tortuous streets, the old houses, the open squares planted with great trees. One wandered amidst churches, cloisters, schools, convents, chapels, porches covered with innumerable figures and carvings. Along the paths lingered young priests in their flowing soutanes, defenders of the Faith and its dogmas, missionaries to carry its teaching into the unknown. The religious idea predominated. Louvain was truly a sanctuary of Christendom. ❀ ❀

Hope and Faith can never be conquered. The hour must surely dawn when Louvain will be restored to its former glory, and "God be praised," **Altyd God Loven**, the old motto of the city, will be a fervent prayer in the mouths of its citizens. ❀ ❀ ❀





BOVE the roofs of Liège hangs the smoke of a thousand tall chimneys. Liège has been a city of factories since those early days when coal and iron, the richest gifts of mother earth, were found beneath its fertile soil. The clever Walloon smiths and the tempered products of their anvils have never lost their fame throughout the world. In the Middle Ages Liège was the arsenal of Europe. From these

foundries came pikes and lances, small cannon and mortars, halberds, swords, poniards, arquebuses. Swashbucklers might yearn for the possession of a Toledo blade or a weapon with the mark of Andrea Ferrara and the running fox. But a popular motto, "Faithful as a dagger of Liège," witnesses to the sound craftsmanship of the northern city. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

Liège is an outpost of Roman civilization, and, in many respects, forms a world apart. On one side is Flemish Tirlemont; on the other, Dutch Maestricht. Aix-la-Chapelle is German. Yet there is some of the old Gallic blood in the veins of the people, who have always had an inclination towards the ideals of France. The history of the settlement goes back to the remotest past. In 578, Monhou, translated under the title of St. Monulphius, whilst making his way



from Maestricht to Dinant, was impressed by the striking beauty of the valley of the Meuse. At the confluence of the Meuse and the Ourthe he stopped amidst a few lonely huts. "God has chosen this place for the salvation of many people," he announced. "Here must be raised a great town. We will build an oratory in honour of St. Cosmius and St. Damien." That pious act was the beginning of the present city. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Every traveller whose fortune it has been to wander along the banks of the Meuse shares the admiration of the saint. The wide horizon frames one of the most magnificent countries in the old world. Liège itself, despite its carbon haze, is extremely beautiful as viewed from the heights of Cointe. "Le plan de Liège est merveilleux," wrote Guichardin in 1582, describing the wide river flowing through the valley, and the mediæval town, a medley of spires and towers, spreading across the little islets. As many Masses were said in Liège as in Rome, the citizens used to boast. The wonderful cathedral-church of St. Lambert has vanished as completely as that of St. Donatian in Bruges. Both were destroyed during the iconoclastic fury which followed in the wake of the French Revolution. But there remain many exquisite churches and public buildings in Liège; St. Jacques, one of the finest examples of its class in Belgium, St. Martin, boldly crowning the hill of Pulemont, and the stern roman-  
esque towers of St. Barthélemy. The Palace of the Bishops is still the delight of historians and the despair of purists. In the cloisters, sculptor Borset defied the architects and outraged every law of taste. His curious building earned the ungrudging praise of Charles V and Margaret of Navarre. They owned no house to equal its glory. A fantasy of Gothic and Renaissance art, which aroused the enthusiasm of Victor Hugo and Théophile Gautier, it recalls the memory of some deserted "patio" in Spain. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Liège was governed by a long line of Prince-Bishops who added temporal to their spiritual dominion. Etienne, thirty-ninth Bishop of Tongres, moved his episcopal seat from that town to Liège in 908. His fifty-ninth successor was dethroned in 1798. For over eight hundred years these prelates not only preserved their state amidst the continual ebb and flow of adjoining powers, but were able by diplomacy and craft to extend their frontiers. The principality, enclosed



by Limburg, Luxemburg, Hainaut, and Brabant, included a portion of the Campine, Hesbaye, Condroz, and the whole country between the Sambre and the Meuse. Bishops of Liège, they were also Counts of Brugeron, Horne, and Looz, Marquesses of Franchimont, and Dukes of Bouillon. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

Mirabeau once remarked that France, during the eighteenth century, had been struggling for political rights which for the most part had been enjoyed for centuries in the towns on the Meuse. The commonwealth of Liège was peculiar in the extent of its freedom. Communal representatives were able to limit and control the Prince-Bishop; the clergy had considerable privilege, especially the chapter of St. Lambert, whilst the nobility retained the greater part of their seignorial claims. The citizens of Liège and the neighbouring towns had no uncertain voice in the management of their interests. The Peace of Fexhe, in 1316, gave them a charter of liberty which was not suppressed until 1684, to be regained at the dawn of the nineteenth century. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

Charlemagne, who established a factory of arms at Herstal, opened schools in Liège. Masterful Bishop Notger (971-1008) extended the walls of the city, and consolidated the influence of his see. Bishop followed bishop, of varying courage and ability. There was Jean de Hinsberg who promised Philip of Burgundy that he would resign his kingdom in favour of Louis of Bourbon, a boy of eighteen. He





neglected his word, and was waited upon by a Franciscan and an executioner with a gleaming sword. "Most reverend lord," explained the friar, "you have broken your word to our duke. He wishes no further delay. Resign at once, or reflect upon your doom." The reign of Louis of Bourbon commenced immediately. Its close was not so happy. The accomplice of Charles the Bold, he quarrelled with Guillaume de La Marck of Arenberg, the fearless "Wild Boar of the Ardennes." One day the ruffians of Arenberg surrounded the prince, and at their head rode the "Sanglier." ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ "Grace, grace ! I am your prisoner," implored the wretched Prince-Bishop. "No grace for thee, wicked sire," replied the pitiless "Sanglier," striking his opponent in the throat and allowing his lifeless body to be dragged naked through the streets. The next bishop, Jean de Horne, caught the Wild Boar at Maestricht in 1484, and murdered him on the spot. ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ Amidst such tumults the citizens of Liège prospered and grew rich. Many calamities chastened the land. The Meuse overflowed from time to time. The province was subject to extraordinary storms. Earthquakes did much damage. War and civil war, raging epidemics, reduced the numbers of the population. Yet Liège was never wholly destroyed, never, in truth, at all disheartened. From the ruins rose phoenix-like a new city to pursue its daily toil and fill its many coffers. ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠

The Middle Ages were not entirely devoted to slaughter and rapine. In the pages of Froissart, and the "Miroir des nobles de Hesbaye" by Jean de Hemricourt, there are many pictures of mediæval luxury and peace. Jehan le Bel, canon of St. Lambert, who died about 1370, was one of the most splendid persons of his time, "of frank and noble condition, and richly dressed." His robes of sendal and fine cloth were trimmed with ermine and studded with gems. Visitors were welcome to his hospitable table. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

"The fashion of his house was this, and he had in this way instructed his squires of honour that without consulting their master if they saw any gentle stranger, whether prelate or knight or squire, they invited him forthwith to dinner or supper, and any prince who visited Liège was brought to dine with Jehan le Bel. When he went to church on holidays there was as large a following as for the Bishop of Liège, forty or fifty in his train, who all came to dinner with him afterwards; he was looked up to as their head by his kinsfolk and friends, and took care of their advancement. He had good natural sense and good demeanour more than most men, he was blithe and gay and glad, and could make songs and virelays, and followed mirth and pastime; and in this course of life he obtained both heritages and pensions. By the grace of God he lived all his days in prosperity and good health, and was more than eighty years old when he died, and according to his rank were his obsequies reverently and costly carried out." ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

A few years after Jehan le Bel had been carried to his tomb in St. Lambert, another famous inhabitant died and was buried in the abbey of the Guillamites. Upon his tomb was written in Walloon:

*Vos ki paseis sor mi, pour lamour Deix proies por mi.*

("You who pass over me, for the love of God pray for me.")

Sir John Maundeville, knight—"albeit I be not worthy"—was born at St. Albans, and before retiring to Liège, had travelled through many provinces and kingdoms, Tartary, Persia, Armenia the Little and the Great, Lybia, Chaldea, Ethiopia, Amazonia, and India. He had seen all the monsters of the East, had refused the Sultan of Egypt's daughter in marriage, had sipped the water of the Fountain of Youth, had sailed within sight of the rocks of Adamant, and





CHÂTEAU OF WALZIN

PROVINCE OF NAMUR







conversed with Prester John and the Great Khan of Cathay. Then he made his home in Liège, "for rheumatic gout, that distress me, fix the end of my labour, against my will (God knoweth)." For thirty years he lived in the city, gaining much credit for his skill in medicine and his knowledge as astrologer, naturalist, philosopher. But of his credit as a writer of the truth there must ever remain great differences of opinion. "Many men list not to give credence to any thing but to what they see with their eye, be the author ever so true."

✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠  
 The most imposing name in the list of the Prince-Bishops is that of Everard de La Marck, near relation of the "Sanglier des Ardennes," and builder of the Bishop's Palace. He reigned from 1506 to 1538, and, under the patronage of Charles V, became Bishop of Chartres in France, of Valence in Spain, and Cardinal of the Church. In his dominion he raised citadel after citadel at Huy, Dinant, Stockhem, and Franchimont. Why should a man of peace make such warlike preparations? asked critics. "Il faut bonne cage à qui veut bien garder son oiseau," was his careful response. First of all his works was the immense palace which he did not live to see finished. Amidst other preoccupations he prepared a gorgeous sepulchre in his cathedral, wherein, like Browning's Bishop of St. Praxed's, he might "lie through centuries, and hear the blessed mutter of the mass."

✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠

Liège has always been a joyous and diligent city, "la fleur des trois Gaules." In 1601 Jean de Glen praised the wives and daughters of the citizens, who were "peu curieuses de la beauté du corps, ou de se parer, adorer, farder, déguiser . . . très diligentes aux œuvres pieuses et laborieuses : car elles gouvernent non seulement les enfans et le ménage, mais encore la boutique, le trafic, achèptent et tiennent registre des mises et des réceptes, sont courageuses, endurcies au travail." That character has not changed in the course of the centuries, although the heedless "cramignon" is rarely danced along the Quai de la Batte. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

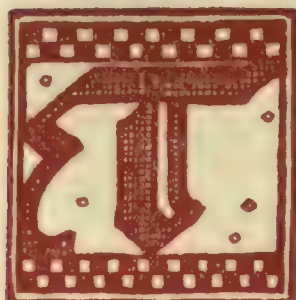
On the Meuse are other cities, equally famous in history but less important industrially. Huy is one of the many ancient towns in Belgium, and not the least picturesque, for above the square tower of the church of Notre Dame rises the massive walls of the citadel. The stormy life of Peter the Hermit closed at Huy. Namur can also boast immense fortifications which frown in the waters of the Sambre and the Meuse. Outside the city died Don John of Austria, the child of Charles V and Barbe Bomberg of Ratisbon. The heart of the young conqueror of Lepanto still rests in Namur, but his body found funeral in the vaults of the Escorial. The florid churches of Namur belong to that later period towards the end of the sixteenth century when the Jesuit fathers copied the architectural taste of Rome and raised baroque temples throughout Belgium. Pierre Huyssens, a Jesuit brother, built St. Loup at Namur, St. Walburge at Bruges (the birthplace of the Order), and St. Pierre at Ghent. The Church of the Béguinage at Brussels and Notre Dame de Hanswijk at Malines were designed by Luc Faidherbe, a pupil of Rubens. Ornate, covered with rococo arabesques, the style itself is a note of triumph at the renaissance of the old Faith. But it lacks the serenity and purity of the Gothic fanes, the cold severity, massive in unrelieved strength, of the romanesque basilicas of the eastern provinces. ♣ ♣

The bizarre campaniles of Dinant have an affinity with the grotesque metal work, the "dinanderie" which has brought renown and credit to the little town for many generations. "Cuivre de Dinant, épées de Cologne, Crucifix de Limoge," was the motto of the furnisher of the Middle Ages. Dinant is the centre of a glorious country of woods and rivers. Every hill has its ruined feudal castle or château



of sloping roofs and pinnacled towers. Walzin on the river Lesse, and Bouillon, in the far corner of the Ardennes, are typical examples of one and the other. Walzin has been restored and is still a residence, although no longer in the possession of the family of its builder. Bouillon is an almost deserted ruin which retains much of its original appearance despite the ravages of time and man. Situated on the rocks above the village, at the end of a narrow valley, surrounded by the thickest woods, and overlooking the swift Semois, the outlines of the dismantled walls are sharply silhouetted against the open sky. Here Godfrey de la Basse-Lorraine and of Bouillon lived in the eleventh century. He was a man of arms who fought in Flanders for his uncle Godfrey the Hunchback, and took part in the siege of Rome. Then, whilst resting at Bouillon, his tutor Peter the Hermit incited him to lead the new crusade, and he rode out of his lonely halls to enter Jerusalem and reign as its king. ✠ ✠ Otbert, Bishop of Liège, lent him money for this holy exploit, and carefully secured the loan upon his vassal's lands. Godfrey never returned from his kingdom in the east, and the Bishops of Liège became owners of the castle. Bouillon was made a dukedom, and, after six centuries of the Prince-Bishops, passed into the hands of the princely house of La Tour d'Auvergne. ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠





THE cities of Hainaut are as fascinating as those in the other provinces of Belgium, although their outward appearance is of a very different character. The mountain solitudes of the Ardennes are here exchanged for the coalfields which crowd the flat plain of the Borinage. For wooded hills and transparent streams we have open country scarred by the schemes of engineers and the muddy water of stagnant canals. The people are different in race and outlook. They are Walloons, and the Walloons, wrote Jules Destrée, are the French of the other side of the frontier. In one of his brilliant essays he speaks of the Flemings as slow, patient, and disciplined. The Walloons, however, are of a lighter nature, untameable, and prone towards inquiry and speculation. The Fleming is usually a good son of Mother Church. The Walloon's active mind is inclined towards scepticism. In the seventeenth century Liège eagerly received the philosophic teaching of the French intellectuals, and published its own edition of the works of Voltaire. ❀ ❀ The Walloon family presents many curious problems to the ethnologist. In war the Walloon infantry excited the admiration of Europe, and formed the backbone of the Spanish arms. Whilst painting flourished in Flanders, Hainaut was early famous for its historians and prose writers. Froissart, most picturesque of chroniclers, was born





THE CATHEDRAL AND BELFRY

TOURNAY





at Valenciennes and died at Chimay. Above all were the Walloons, celebrated for their skill in music. Grétry was a native of Liège. ✚ In modern times Hainaut has become an immense industrial region. Colliers delve in the pits, and foundrymen swelter before the heat of the furnaces. To realize the conditions of life in the Borinage we must turn to the statuettes of Constantin Meunier. This great artist found his inspiration amidst the most depressing scenes industrialism can produce. The mediæval craftsmen devoted their skill to fashioning images of saints and kings. Meunier took his subjects from the people, and moulded, without idealization, the men and women who toil in the mines of Hainaut. Once again he taught the oft forgotten truth of the essential dignity of labour. His fore-runners had carved the tragedy of the Crucifixion. Meunier told us of the everyday tragedies of the mining fields, the sudden death from the fire-damp, the heroism of the rescuers. ✚ ✚ ✚ ✚ In the daylight hours the Borinage can be seen at work under its immense pall of smoke and steam. An all-pervading white dust floats in the air and settles on every ledge. The villages are ugly and shapeless, endless streets of small cottages without form or beauty. Linked together by the restless energy of the iron-rails, they stretch hand in hand over the grey country, lost behind mountains of coal ash and slack, crouching beside the towers of huge factories and the gaunt walls of sheds. At night fierce fires cast ruddy gleams across the black sky. The white lights of electric arcs flicker and hiss above the mine shafts and goods yards. The activity is unsleeping. The earth groans in labour. ✚ ✚ ✚ ✚ ✚ ✚ ✚ That is a picture of the present. These pages seek only to recreate the atmosphere of the past when Hainaut had its prince and court, when foreign armies swept across its well-tilled fields. The story of Hainaut is involved with the chronicles of Flanders and Brabant. At times the Count of Flanders was also ruler of Brabant. Baldwin IX of Flanders was also Baldwin VI of Hainaut, as well as Emperor of Constantinople. The province has always had many links with England. Edward III married Philippa of Hainaut. The unfortunate Duchess Jacqueline, after an invalid divorce from the Duke of Brabant, married Humphrey of Gloucester, brother to Henry V. This spirited and beautiful woman was the last sovereign to control

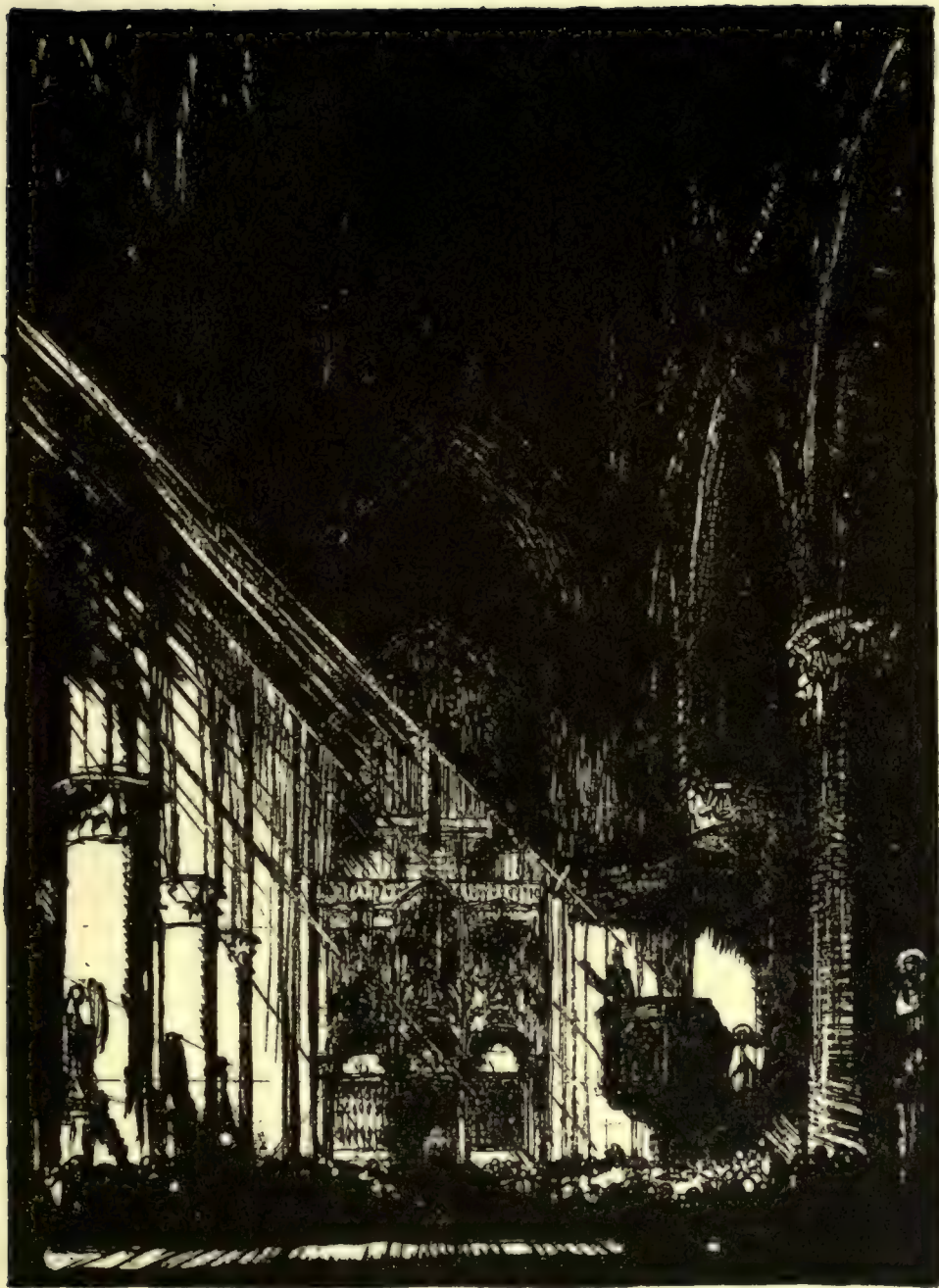
Hainaut as an independent principality. On the one side she was assailed by her uncle the Prince-Bishop of Liège ; on the other by Philip of Burgundy. By her first marriage Hainaut and Brabant were united. But the Duke's humiliations were too hard to bear. Brussels rose in rebellion against him, and the Duchess fled to England. Divorced by Pope Gregory XII of Avignon she gave her hand to the Duke of Gloucester in exchange for five thousand fighting men. With this force she was enabled to reign once more in Mons, the old capital of Hainaut. Then Philip of Burgundy besieged and took the city, and Humphrey deserted his wife for his English mistress Eleanor Cobham. The Duchess escaped to Breda, and, the Duke of Brabant being now dead, married Philip of Burgundy's governor of Holland, a matrimonial venture as unsuccessful as its predecessors. Her death in 1436 closed a stormy life, and Hainaut and its dependencies passed into the control of the House of Burgundy. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Mons, the mountain on the plain, possesses an exquisite Gothic church designed by the mason who built the Hôtel de Ville of Louvain. Not far from St. Waudru is the baroque Spanish belfry which tells of the dominion of the Austrian archdukes. The romantic tale of the capture of Mons by Louis of Nassau will be found at its length in Motley's volumes. Unluckily Alva became master in the end, and the inhabitants suffered the usual fate of a conquered town. Mons was besieged twice by Louis XIV, and also by Marlborough and Dumouriez. There are many interesting cities and towns in Hainaut. Charleroy on the Sambre is comparatively of recent growth and notable for its commercial activity rather than any historical associations. The abbey church of St. Vincent at Soignies gives distinction to a small town quiet in the contentment of many convents. The abbey was completed in the eleventh century, and its rude simplicity and strength are typical of the builders who raised it. But further west is a greater city with a cathedral which can hold its own for size against any in Europe. The inhabitants of Tournay are justly proud of their city. There is a very ancient verse which expresses this joy : ❀ ❀

Tournay, cité noble et antique,  
Assise en terroir plantureux,  
Es confins de Gaulle Belgique,  
Dessus l'Escault, fleuve joyeux,

Fut fondée en temps très heureux,  
Six cens ans avec dix et trois  
Avant que Christ, le Roy de Cieulx,  
Nasquist pour mourir en la Croix.





INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH

DIXMUDE





Tournay is the *Turris Nerviorum* of Caesar, capital of the Nervians of the Sambre, and reputed one of the most ancient towns on the northern side of the Alps. Here lived the Merovingian kings, and here died Childeric. From generation to generation the tale continues. Wolsey was created Bishop by Henry VIII, and held the see for five years. France ruled the city from Philip Augustus to Francis I, then came Henry Tudor, and then followed Spain and the dominion of Charles V. Fontenoy made the town vassal to Maria Theresa and the Emperor Joseph, until France reconquered it under the Republic and the Empire, and it was transferred to the Low Countries in 1815. Every change of rule has left its relic. The soil, turned up in fortifications by each aggressive commander from Julius Caesar to Vauban, must still hide innumerable riches. In 1653 the wealth of Childeric was accidentally unearthed, jewellery, money, arms. When Napoleon sought a device he found the symbol in the golden bees of the Merovingian emperors' treasury. ♣ ♣ ♣ The Belfry of Tournay is the oldest in Belgium. On the summit is a clock and three bells, one of which is named Bancloque. ♣ ♣

Bancloque suis de commune nommé  
Car pour effroy de guerre suis sonnée.

Facing Bancloque and its Belfry is a statue to Christine de Lalaing, Princess d'Epinoi. In 1581, during the absence of her husband who was governor of the city, she took command and held Farnese and the Spaniards at bay for over two months. The fall of Tournay broke her heart, and, flying for refuge to Antwerp, she died within six months. The glory of Tournay is its great five-towered romanesque cathedral. The nave is romanesque, the transept admirable thirteenth-century French work, and the choir slightly later, having been commenced in 1242, and finished in 1325. The characteristic of this remarkable building is the grouping of the five towers at the crossing of the choir and the nave. They appear to unite two separate churches. Some similarity is to be found in the cathedrals of Laon, Limburg, and, more closely, Bamberg. But in each case the towers are in a different position. When the seven towers stood in brotherhood above the long roof, Tournay was unequalled for majesty in all Europe. The grandeur of the old building has not been lost, whilst the interior can only be described by the pen of a poet. "We have

severe and sombre romanesque in the nave, magnificent chastity of expression and what may be called pure architecture in the transept ; when we enter the choir, however, it is to be transported to another world and stage of society. From where all was grave, dignified, self-centred, and self-restrained, impressive without heaviness, and vast without monotony, we are suddenly removed to an expansive structure that is blazing with light, and has its windows filled with stained glass, divided from each other by the most slender piers, and having mullions like rods. A triforium of the most elegant kind takes the place of the dim and vast gallery of the nave ; enormous clerestories supply that of the dim arcades which surmount the gallery of the latter and the aisles beneath it, and give an awful solemnity to the western half of the building. The latter is Egyptian in its grandeur, impressive in every feature, almost void of ornament, and seemingly indestructible by time ; the former startles the spectator by its lightness, and the audacity of the builder of those fairy piers, which have bent into two curves, one inwards and one outwards, and are hardly able to bear the roof. . . . The aisles of the nave are but dimly lighted by windows placed high in the wall ; those of the choir, on the contrary, are illuminated by vast glazed spaces, which seem hardly divided by the narrow buttresses—one cannot speak of walls in such a place, for there are none.”✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠

Noble in scheme and lovely in every proportion, the cathedral of Tournay is typical of the bygone importance of the city. The vast portal is covered by stone carvings. In the fourteenth century the sculptors of Tournay were the cleverest in Belgium. Probably, as some critics have suggested, their work had much influence upon the Flemish painters of the following century, as shown in the panels of the two Van Eycks. The craftsmen of Tournay lavished all their skill upon the cathedral, and the portal is crowded with huge figures of saints and martyrs, Merovingian kings, prophets, bishops, angels, devils, and two characters never forgotten in mediæval art—father Adam and mother Eve.✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠

Parents of the human race, they must sometimes weep hot tears as they regard their children. ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠





INTERIOR OF THE CLOTH HALL

YPRES







ELGIUM has now been traversed from sea to frontier. We have travelled from Flanders and its great cities into Brabant, gazing for a moment at Liège and the towns on the Meuse, briefly touching the Ardennes, Hainaut, and the country around Tournay. The records of these ancient provinces are rich in tradition and incident. Their chronicles are not to be exhausted in a hundred volumes. But much of

the tale is vital to a knowledge of modern Europe and the condition of Belgium at the present day.✥ ✥ ✥ ✥ ✥ ✥ ✥

In these pages an attempt has been made to weave a few of the outstanding events of this picturesque history into a background formed by the artists and craftsmen of a wonderful land, so that its lords and rulers may be traced amidst the dust of the faded arras-cloths of a bygone age. From the tapestries off the looms of Audenaerde and Brussels peer all the fabulous heroes of antiquity, kings of Israel in the stiff folds of their Gothic robes, the fantastic basilisks, hippogriffs, and chimaera so dear to the mediæval mind. So here, in printed word, with dropped stitches and many a gap in the story, may be discovered through the misty veil of time the roofs of Bruges with the valiant Ereimbalds still struggling amid the buttresses of St. Donatian's; Jan van Artevelde inflaming the crowds

beneath the Belfry of Ghent ; Philip's body under the slain of Roosbeke ; Louis of Creçy and Louis of Maele ; all the Counts of Flanders and the Dukes of Burgundy ; Godfrey of Bouillon riding at the head of his Crusaders ; Norbert launching thunder from his episcopal seat in the abbey church of St. Laurent ; Spanish captains and Austrian archdukes, Don John, Alva, and Farnese ; the frail steeple of Antwerp rising above a "kermesse" in the Place de Meir ; the "Ommegang" passing in front of the King's House of Brussels ; the Infanta Isabella hunting through the woods of Tervueren ; Justus Lipsius philosophizing before the Hôtel de Ville of Louvain ; Jan van Rysbroeck meditating upon the infinite in the cloisters of Groenendael ; Wolsey enthroned beneath the five towers of Tournay, and Becket slaking his thirst at the village well of Loo. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

These are the shadows on the frayed and worn hangings. Cities and men. Cities from which the magnificence has in many cases departed, men whose glory in every case is but a handful of ashes. Monkish historians and unknown artists have preserved the memory of their deeds. The features are often indistinct, the architecture at fault. We must guess at much we are not told. No man can explain his destiny. Princes are themselves ruled by a fate they cannot control. Their thoughts are swayed by ambition, passion, the multifold weaknesses of the flesh. The nations they govern are moved by sudden impulse and quick anger. But the rise of a people can generally be accounted for, and a race only loses its sovereign power when it loses its honour. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Such reasons are found when we study the history of the past, a past preserved to us chiefly by the skill of the artist. When we wish to recreate the life of our forefathers we are compelled to turn to the achievements of the craftsmen who ministered to the needs and pleasures of their contemporaries. To breathe the atmosphere of the years that are dead we must linger in the houses our fathers built, the churches they prayed in, the palaces from which they governed. The trifling objects which passed in daily use from hand to hand must be examined. Nothing is too small to omit from this scrupulous survey. Clothes, arms, playthings, tools, all help to form a judgment. Every man who fashions these things is a craftsman, and, directly he begins to take a joy in his labour, he ranks amongst the artists. Studying





RUINS OF A CHURCH

OUDE STUYVENKING



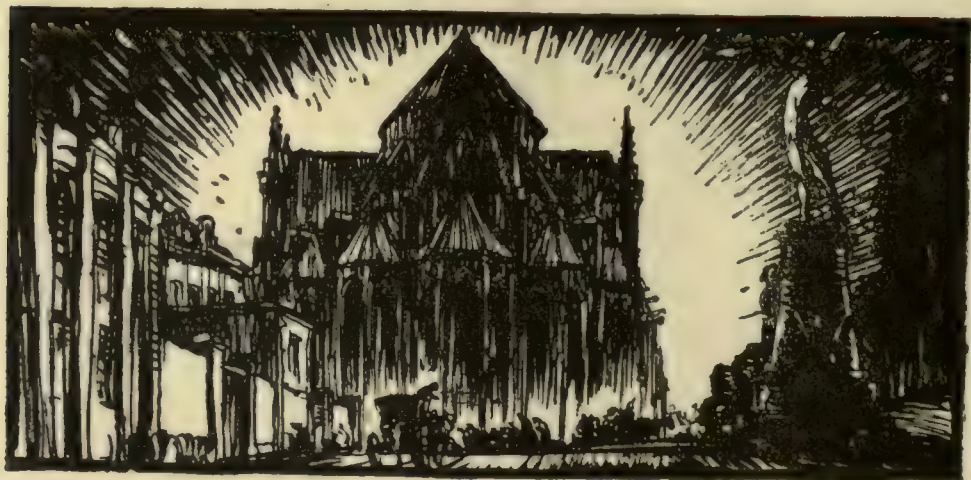


these relics which have served their purpose and outlived their time, we realize that every sincere artist—painter of altar-pieces, builder of cathedrals, carver of chair-legs—unconsciously sums up the ideals and aspirations of his generation. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

In Belgium art and history march hand in hand, closer indeed than in any other country of Europe. For in Flanders and the adjoining provinces the art is essentially that of the people and not of any particular section of the community. The high standard of civilization which distinguishes Belgium from its earliest period is notably revealed by the sumptuous town-halls in Flanders and Brabant, spontaneous offerings of public spirit and an innate delight in the beautiful. They were not the grandiose memorials that sovereigns love to raise, but well-considered and carefully undertaken schemes in which the humblest householder enjoyed his share. Towns with only a few thousand inhabitants possessed hôtels-de-ville upon which the municipalities lavished every enrichment art could create. The incitement of religion and piety which built the cathedrals of the Middle Ages was lacking. These proud citizens did not need such spurs to reinforce their efforts. And their architects were not swayed by the exotic influences which guided the hand and taste of the cathedral builders. The mediæval halls of Flanders and Brabant stand in a class apart, Flemish in design and conception, monuments of one of the earliest and greatest of all democracies. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

We can easily recreate the people who formed this race, the common man of the fields and the streets, a unit in the crowd, one head in the numbering of the nation—his life has been preserved by craftsmen, brothers to those who built his dwelling-place. In a manuscript known as "le rentier d'Audenarde," now in the Royal Library of Brussels, a fourteenth-century miniaturist has drawn a series of sketches illustrating the vocations of the Fleming of his day. A countryman drives his horse and tumbril, laden with grain, to the mill. A mower ankle-deep in the corn rests for an instant on his scythe. A party of gossips, with baskets of fruit and eggs, talk in a market-place. Husbandmen slowly turn up the heavy soil with huge spades. A ploughman drives his furrow through the fields. In another manuscript, amidst the gorgeous fantasies of the miniaturist's art, is a tiny drawing of a man at his loom—the loom which

supported the magnificence of the sister towns. These peasants were heroes, and the fathers of heroes. ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ To the good citizen, as well as to the statesman, the story of Belgium presents innumerable problems, and teaches the sternest of lessons. Many of the difficulties remain to be solved. Centuries will not exhaust the retribution which must be exacted for the martyrdom of this heroic kingdom. Our children's children will shudder at the recital of deeds which can never be avenged. ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ To the artist these old cities have formed sanctuaries of infinite delight. Belgium has been a land of enchantment. Its treasures have formed part of the world's riches. We have written as if these relics are still in being, whereas we know too well that many have vanished as if they had existed only in the emptiest dreams. Their destruction is an infamy over which future generations will tremble in anger. For the unborn have been robbed of their heritage. ✿ ✿ ✿ A country may be devastated, but its history cannot be wiped from the chronicles. A people may be murdered, but it cannot be robbed of its soul. ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ To an indomitable race civilized mankind offers a silent homage, a tender sympathy. The bonds of the flesh have been shattered. A new meaning has been given to the inspiration of patriotism. And, in showing us how death can be despised, Belgium rises to a new life and an immortal glory amongst the nations. ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿













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